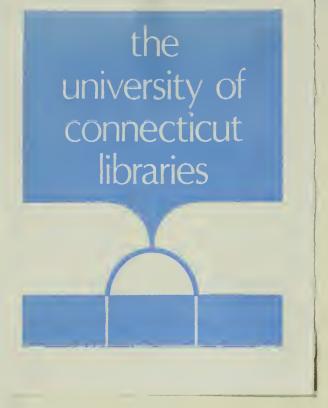
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Antique furniture in Suffice.

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Antique Furniture IN SUFFIELD · CONNECTICUT 1670-1835





REMNANT OF COVER TO THE FIRST SUFFIELD TOWN BOOK

Antique Furniture IN SUFFIELD connecticut 1670-1835

By CHARLES S. BISSELL



PUBLISHED BY

The Connecticut Historical Society AND

The Suffield Historical Society

1956



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Introduction



NUMBER of years ago it occurred to me that it might be added protection, insurancewise, if I were to photograph some of the pieces of antique furniture we had in our home. At least, it might save a lot of argument with the insurance adjuster in case of loss for

one reason or another. Such losses can and do happen.

The house was upset for days with cameras and floodlights, but the net result was worth all the trouble because I then had a record, in both black and white and color slides, which could be filed away in a safe place.

Things have a way of going beyond the original bounds, and that is what happened in this case. It seemed foolish not to expand the project to include other desirable antiques owned in Suffield so that there would be a record of those pieces as well, and also to record as much information about each piece as could be found, particularly as to family ownership and the cabinetmaker. The project was to be confined to just those items which have come down from one generation to another in Suffield families.

At the beginning, there was some question in my mind as to how my fellow townspeople would receive the idea of having their family heirlooms photographed, but all seemed very much interested and gave us complete cooperation. They have been wonderful and I appreciate it.

Sources for research included not only all the many account books, diaries and journals but also the long lists of estate inventories, wills and land records. It was only by means of these records that we have been able to compile the rather formidable list of furnituremakers in Suffield from 1670 through the period of our best known cabinetmaker of the early 1800's—John Fitch Parsons.

Something should be said about a few of the items found within the bounds of our town which shed light on early life in this vicinity.

Back in the dark ages, prehistoric animals roamed through Suffield, as they did through much of the Connecticut valley. A few years ago, it occurred to me that I should like to own a prehistoric animal track like those found farther north along the Connecticut River, from Holyoke to Northampton. I happened to mention this to a good friend of mine who lived near the bank of Stony Brook on the Boston Neck Road in Suffield; and much to my amazement, he showed me several sandstone slabs with very clear tracks. He told me that he had walked up and down the brook splitting the outcropping of sandstone for just such tracks. One day he took me with him and we split rock until we were worn out, but we had no luck that day.

The first human beings here were probably a pre-Algonquin people, who were succeeded by an Algonquin Indian tribe. From all available information, it seems that this particular location was set aside by the Indians for hunting and fishing. There is no evidence that there was ever a permanent village here; but the Indians must have spent a lot of time shooting arrows about the place, for it has been very fertile ground for the finding of arrowheads, spearheads, adzes, and other Indian relics. Several fine stone bowls have also been found here, indicating that there must have been temporary encampments here when the shad were running or when fishing on the Congamuck Ponds.

So I have come to the conclusion that one can find most anything he is looking for in this town—if he knows where to look for it. When I wanted a millstone for the garden, I asked a workman here in town, who had roamed the town all his life, if he knew where I could get such a stone. His reply was startling: "Sure, but I will have to have your permission first, and how many do you want?" There were several of them at the bottom of the old "swimmin hole" in the brook back of my own house. He hauled out three dandies.

It has been interesting as well as educational to read so much about the everyday life of those who lived here so long ago, and at

times I feel that I know many of them personally. I have a deep admiration for them. In fact, it has been difficult for me, at times, to stick to the subject of furniture and not become sidetracked by some of the more amusing and, perhaps, more interesting activities of our ancestors.

This record is presented for what it may be worth, with the hope that it may encourage others to do similar research in the many other small rural towns of New England where so much early furniture was made.

C. S. B.





Early Suffield

HE history of the settlement of Suffield and the succeeding years from 1670 to 1747, while the town was still under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, has been so amply covered in Hezekiah S. Sheldon's Suffield Historical Collections, published in 1879, that I shall

give no more than the briefest outline of the earliest days of the town, so that the reader may know something of when and how there happened to be a town called Suffield, Connecticut.

Major John Pynchon of Springfield was, probably, the one man who had more than any other to do with the town's settlement, for it was he who bought up the large tract of land from the Indians in what was first called Stoney River, then Southfield, and finally Suffield. The vicinity of Suffield, with its ample water power for the small industries of those days, was well known to many at that time. For twenty years or more before, a road had been laid out, straggling up from Windsor and dividing into two branches in what is now Suffield—one branch going westward to Woronoco or Westfield and one branch to Springfield.

It was in May, 1670, that a petition for a new town was made to the General Court of Massachusetts. This petition was granted by the Magistrates but was denied by the Deputies. On October 12th, 1670 both branches of the General Court finally confirmed the grant of a plantation "six miles square on the west side of the Connecticott toward Windsor." Later it was somewhat enlarged.

Early rumor had it that the Grantors did not look with as much favor upon Stoney River as upon some other locations and that they did not encourage the most desirable applicants to settle there. Be that as it may, the records do not suggest that the first settlers of Suffield were a worthless lot; far from it.

The next few years saw some of the land cleared and houses built, and Major Pynchon, who always had an eye for business, constructed a sawmill and a corn mill. But the year 1675 brought news that King Philip and his boys were on the warpath; and it scared the daylights out of everyone here, and justly so. They abandoned the town, burying their treasures in the ground or in wells, and went to the security of Springfield for the next two years.

This proved to be a wise move, for the Indians burned the town, along with four other towns nearby. Major Pynchon lost both his mills. Two years later, however, in 1677, all but two of the original group of settlers returned and things started to hum again.

From then on, these folks struggled to carve a living out of the wilderness. They raised cattle and sheep, when the bears or wolves did not get them first. They built sawmills, corn mills, fulling mills, and iron works all along the banks of Stony Brook. Food was plentiful as hunting and fishing were excellent, particularly in the spring when the salmon and shad were running.

Suffield grew and prospered; its land was fertile and its people worked hard. They raised quantities of wheat, corn, and flax; their apple trees began to bear and they built cider mills and brandy "stills." Cider, brandy, and metheglin were made and consumed in great quantities in those days, even the church and the ministers being good customers.

Generally speaking, Suffield has always been a prosperous community and its menfolks good businessmen. Every now and then, however, a group of them would think that "the grass was greener in another pasture" and would try some new venture. When they did this, they usually lost out. For example, Thaddeus Leavitt and Joseph Pease both went into the shipping business and had their own boats built for the West Indies trade. Leavitt's was the brig Mercury built in Windsor, but Pease had his built in Suffield. Both of these men found out, to their sorrow, that shipping was not for them. Others thought they saw "a killing" to be made in western lands and invested heavily in the Western Reserve and in western New York State. Many of them died broke.

The raising of tobacco and the manufacturing of cigars followed; and this industry proved well suited to the community, the first cigar factory in the United States being located here. Tobacco has been the business of many of the well-to-do families in Suffield for many years. Now, that industry has been fading for several years and may take its place along with Suffield's other lost industries. Who knows?

Perhaps the most dramatic growth and decline of industry in Suffield occurred in the field of papermaking.

This began in about the year 1800 when the first of two mills was established. These were the Franklin Mill and the Eagle Mill. The latter of these enjoyed the distinction in American paper history of having been the first American mill to make paper for use by the United States Government, in 1820. Otherwise, both mills had very checkered careers lasting through most of the nineteenth century and both were eventually destroyed by fire and never rebuilt.



Fine Houses - Fine Furniture

old furniture in such a small community as Suffield, and perhaps it might be well answered by considering some of the houses lived in by eighteenth-century residents. The same thing probably held true in those days as does today,

that a family who could afford a nice house also wanted comparable furnishings. Maybe they were not as easily acquired and paid for then as now, with the modern time payment plans; but they, nevertheless, did acquire nice things to live with.

Located at the south end of the Village Green is the largest of all the old houses, generally known as The Hatheway Place. It represents three periods of construction, early eighteenth, mid-eighteenth, and late eighteenth century, and contains a total of twenty-two rooms.

Oliver Phelps, a man of much wealth, was responsible for the last addition, the north wing, which was built in 1795. The beauty of the carved mantels and door casings and the French wallpapers, all done under the guiding hand of Asher Benjamin, called for nothing but the finest of furnishings (Plate No. 52).

Ashel Hatheway bought the place from Phelps in 1802; and he, too, was a man of wealth. It is easy to conceive the quantity of fine things these two families must have had. Yet, today, there are only a couple of pieces of furniture known to have come down in the Hatheway family and none in the Phelps family.

The Joseph Pease house, 1760, was another establishment which housed many choice pieces in its day (Plate No. 55). Although this house was torn down in 1902 and very little, if any, of the Pease furniture can now be identified, we do have Joseph Pease's account book, which lists several articles ordered from Eliphelet Chapin (Plate No. 58), the cabinetmaker of East Windsor. This might have

set a standard of quality for the Pease furnishings; if so, then this house also was something to wonder at.

THE GAY MANSION

The "Gay Mansion," located a few rods north of Day Avenue on the east side of High Street, now commonly called "Main Street," was built in 1795 by Ebenezer King and is one of the finest examples of the builder's art of that period.

Until the death of the last Suffield member of the Gay family, Mrs. Elise Alling, the furnishings probably remained more or less as they were in the early days. I recall them very clearly because, when a boy, I spent a great deal of time there with Mrs. Alling. She had lived in France at one period of her life and spoke French fluently. This was a godsend to me, as I was having trouble with my French in school and needed her help and plenty of it.

It was undoubtedly this association with her and the fine old things in the house which generated my first real interest in antiques. She always insisted that I sit in the green Windsor chair, with the large writing arm and the little drawer under the seat. When we finished the French lesson, she would often tell me about various things in the house—perhaps the stencil on the wall or some portrait of an ancestor. There were several of these stiff old portraits in the house; and to my boyish eyes they were horrible.

In the dining room was a Hepplewhite type sideboard of cherry with curly maple legs, attributed to Fitch Parsons. But the real prize was the set of six Queen Anne style chairs with Spanish feet. A Burnap clock stood in the south entryway, and a lovely set of Chippendale chairs lined the walls of the main central hall. The stairway to the chambers above was enclosed and was not in evidence in the hallway at all. The bedrooms had all the late eighteenth-century atmosphere one could wish for, even to the original heavy brocade or chintz drapes at the window and canopies on the beds.

It is sickening to recall these fine things and realize that the entire contents of the house could have been bought for the sum of only \$2500. No one in town had that much, however, to "blow in" on antiques; so it was all put up at auction and sold. Very little of it remained in Suffield, I am sorry to say; and that is an example of

what has happened to much of our fine antique furniture. This was in 1916 and some of the older dealers still speak of the auction with awe. See Plates Nos. 53, 54.

THE GAY MANSE

The Gay Manse, 1742, is not to be confused with The Gay Mansion, as they represent two different periods. The Manse is located almost across the Green from where the Pease house stood and was built by the Rev. Ebenezer Gay. The place was owned and lived in by members of the Gay family until a comparatively recent date, when it was acquired by the Suffield Academy for use as the Headmaster's House (Plate No. 51).

The furnishings remained about the same up to the final sale and probably looked much the same as when the early "Devines" lived there. The last of the family to reside there was Miss Mary Gay Robinson, who certainly fitted into the picture admirably. Upon her death, they removed no less than nine petticoats from her body. Quaint, to say the least.

With the passing of Miss Robinson, the house was dismantled; and the many fine antiques, including a Hepplewhite style sideboard, probably by Parsons, were removed from Suffield by heirs.

As a matter of fact, Suffield was pretty well built up by 1750, particularly High Street; but, of course, many of those old houses have long since burned or have otherwise been destroyed. It is pleasing to note, however, the great number of eighteenth-century houses which still stand and are representative of what must have been a period of gracious living.

Some of these other houses certainly should be mentioned even though they are tucked away on the side roads and difficult for the stranger in town to find. It is these houses and the families who lived in them that complete the picture of a very prosperous eighteenth-century community: the Daniel Spencer house on Prospect Street, built in 1743 and still owned by the Spencer family; the William King house on North Street, built in 1750; the Luther Loomis Place, raised April 29, 1790; the Daniel Remington house on Hill Street, built in 1750; the Jonathan Sheldon Place on Sheldon Street, built in 1723; and more than fifty others, all worthy examples.



Suffield Furniture AND THE CABINETMAKERS



LIST of early Suffield furniture must necessarily be incomplete. The greater part of the furniture listed in old Suffield inventories has scattered to the four winds over the last hundred years. Some of it has rotted in old attics and cellars, some been broken up

for firewood, much of it has been discarded for more modern pieces and perhaps sold to the itinerant "picker," and some of it is still treasured by families who have long since left Suffield. So much has gone that some sort of record of the remaining pieces seemed warranted. This record includes only those pieces which have come down in Suffield families, most of which I believe to have been made in Suffield or vicinity.

Perhaps the only justification for publishing this record is the hope that it may encourage others in New England towns to do likewise and thereby learn more about the obscure country cabinetmaker, who made so much really good furniture—particularly in the eighteenth century.

The Suffield Probate records and old inventories are very complete, although to find them, one must go to Northampton, Massachusetts for records up to 1747, then to Hartford up to about 1815, and finally to our own Town Court for the rest. Also, fortunately, we have an unusual wealth of material in the Kent Memorial Library: Account Books, Diaries, including one incomplete Account Book of a truly good cabinetmaker—John Fitch Parsons. He was a real craftsman. Fifty or more other Account Books of a general nature, common to the eighteenth century, of merchant, farmer and trader, were avail-

able and produced the names of many others who probably made furniture as a side line, depending upon their ability and the joiner's and carpenter's tools they possessed. Of course, in those days, rural citizens exchanged very little cash. Accounts were balanced by the two parties getting together, perhaps once a year, on a cold winter's evening, each with his own book of accounts, and "squaring up." Usually the cash difference was quite small. Looking over these accounts, I was amazed at the versatility of these country folk. They could turn their hand to many trades, such as weaving, shoemaking and tanning, hat making, cloth dressing, blacksmithing, brick making; and with few exceptions, they were all farmers. Others traded in indigo and merchandise; and almost every one, it seems, had a cider mill or made brandy. Then, too, there was the chap who was handy with tools and could turn out a table or a bedstead or a coffin.

Those who made more furniture than others were usually house builders by trade. They had the tools and were accustomed to working with wood. Sometimes the only clue we have as to who were carpenters, joiners, dish turners, or chairmakers is in the Land Records, where they were designated as such or in their inventories, where joiner's and carpenter's tools are listed. Joseph Howard and John McMorran were two of the house builders who also made furniture; and their Account Books are most informative, particularly about the various things they made for some of the Suffield houses now standing—such as cornices, door and window cases, window caps, and turned pillars.

Naturally, I had hoped to be able to identify certain pieces of furniture as being made by some one craftsman, but that is virtually impossible. On the other hand, there is recorded so much furniture made in Suffield during the eighteenth century that it is possible to make some pretty good guesses as to the probable cabinetmaker. I think these guesses may be a lot closer to the truth than many of the antiques advertised as "attributed to so and so."

Some of the pieces illustrated here were definitely made outside of Suffield, but these are quite easily identified as the handiwork of the Chapin school of East Windsor or some one of the Hartford or Springfield cabinetmakers.

The first furniture makers of Suffield worked in yellow and white

pine, oak, ash, maple and walnut. Suffield was settled early enough to have produced a few pieces of the "Pilgrim type furniture," one or two of which are still in existence. Following this period, the workmen, prior to Parsons, adhered closely to the Queen Anne style and worked chiefly in cherry wood. It is my belief that this Queen Anne style was popular in the rural areas for a great many years, possibly during the last three quarters of the eighteenth century up to about 1790. I suppose this was because most of these occasional furniture makers were not particularly interested in new styles and also because they had little or no contact with the professional cabinetmaker outside. They knew one style and stuck to it. Then Parsons introduced a new style to Suffield, Hepplewhite, using inlay, some mahogany and much maple, both plain and curly. Later, he worked in the Empire style. For a period of nearly thirty years most of the Suffield-made furniture came from his shop, and excellent furniture it was too. He must have had good training under a fine craftsman; but sorry to say, there is no record to indicate with whom he might have worked.



"Pilgrim" Type Furniture AND ITS MAKERS

same Suffield family to the present generation was in the Norton and Sikes families. Captain George Norton, one of the original settlers of Suffield, died in 1696. His inventory, filed in Northampton, lists one chest with drawers. This is, without doubt, the five-legged chest on frame shown in Plate No. 5. Captain Norton may very possibly have been the maker of this chest, as he had all the joiner's tools necessary and far more than the ordinary person had at that time. The "greate chair," shown in Plate No. 1, may also have been by his hand. In 1695, the Town engaged Captain George Norton and Richard Austin, who was definitely known to be a millwright and joiner, to make all the windows for the minister's house, at eighteen pence per light, the Town agreeing to pay for the same in provisions and flax. A further account of the furniture in the Norton family will be found in a subsequent chapter.

In the Sikes family, there have come down a Carver type chair and a box of the type now known as "Bible boxes," and a footstool. Although Victory Sikes had carpenter's tools, neither he nor Jonathan Sikes, who owned all three pieces, was designated as a "joiner" in the Land Records. Therefore it is probably not possible to attribute the chair and stool to them (Plate No. 2). However, the crudely gouge-carved "square box," as it is listed in Jonathan Sikes' inventory, may easily have been made by him or his father (Plate No. 9).

There are two so-called Hadley chests in Suffield. The first (Plate No. 3) is the Thankfull Taylor chest, which has been given con-

siderable publicity as one of the outstanding examples of the Hadley type chest (C. F. Luther, *The Hadley Chest*, No. 99). This chest is one of the very few examples to have the full name carved on the front instead of the usual initials. The following account was written by Mr. W. J. Hickmott, Sr., whose son, Mr. W. J. Hickmott, Jr., left the chest to the Suffield Historical Society in his will.

HISTORY OF THE THANKFULL TAYLOR CHEST

"The following is from records of W. J. Hickmott Sr., supported by letters in envelope tacked to the inside of the chest.

"On September 16th, 1889, went with Mr. Welch to Suffield, Conn. to look at this chest. Found it in the attic of a small one and a half story house where lived Mr. F. S. Remington, a man then 78 years of age and the great, great grandson of Thankful L. Taylor, for whom the chest was made, her name and date being carved on the front, 'Thankful L Taylor,* February the 18th. 1701.'

"Mr. Remington said that the chest was made by Thankful L. Taylor's father, a cripple, and that it was made with the most primitive tools, principally a jackknife for the carving and the ordinary simple tools usually found among the people of that period.

"The front of the chest is Sycamore, the top Pine, and the ends of Pine and Oak. It is all original except the mouldings of the front panels and the drawer knobs. Mr. Remington said that he had written to his daughter in Philadelphia asking her if she wanted to keep the chest and she replied that she did not.

"I bought the chest for \$40.00 and moved it to Hartford and just about broke up the family. The top was somewhat scarred, and there was a coat of red paint over all, and my good wife wondered if I were going to put it in the house. After our getting off the paint and oiling the chest two or three times, it looked better to her but she still was doubtful as to what the neighbors would think as I worked away at it in the yard. However, opinions changed with the years and now it is one of our choicest pieces. It is a source of gratification that Mr. Luke Vincent Lockwood thought it good enough to illustrate it in his book, 'Colonial Furniture in America.'

^{*} The confusion in the name Thankful L. Taylor and Thankfull Taylor was, without doubt, due to the manner in which the name was carved on the chest. The keyhole comes between the two "L's" so that it was erroneously assumed to be Thankful L.

"I will add that the Hon. William L Loomis wrote me on April 18, 1900, an interesting letter, to be found in the chest, giving some of the facts about it. Loomis was Town Clerk of Suffield."

The above was written by W. J. Hickmott, Sr., about 1907, and is part of a book he was compiling but never finished. A receipt for \$40.00 signed by F. S. Remington is attached to the chest.

Like so many legends, the one about this having been made by Thankful L. Taylor's father, Samuel of Suffield, with a jackknife, cannot be true because he died September 7th, 1689, and the chest is dated February 18th, 1701. After his death, her mother married Thomas Copley, Sr. of Suffield on May 25th, 1693. Copley was a carpenter but there is little possibility that he made the chest for his stepdaughter. However, I prefer the following probability: namely, that the chest was not made for Thankful L. Taylor of Suffield, daughter of Samuel Taylor, but for one Thankfull Taylor, daughter of John Taylor of Hadley and Mary Selden. This Thankfull was born in 1680 and married Nathaniel Warner of Suffield, May 10th, 1710, as his second wife. Their daughter, Thankfull Warner, was born May 31st, 1711, and married Jonathan Remington, Jr. November 5th, 1735, son of Jonathan, Sr. and Sarah Hovey Remington. So there is a direct connection of this Thankfull Taylor of Hadley with the Remington family, whereas there is no connection at all of Thankful L. Taylor, daughter of Samuel, with the Remington family, so far as I know. Furthermore, the dates would suggest that the chest was made for Thankfull's twenty-first birthday.

The other Hadley chest (Plate No. 4) is identified only as the "H N Chest," because to date nothing more is known of its early history or ownership. Dr. Horace Fuller, M.D., of Hartford bought the chest in Suffield about the turn of the century—around 1900.

Of course, it is always interesting to make guesses in a case like this. First, we assume that the chest was made for a young girl, whose maiden name would be represented by the initials "H N." A search of the Records suggests some one of the Noble family. This family was in Westfield in the earliest times, but the name occurs also in Suffield only a little later. When Dr. Fuller bought the chest, he was apparently told that it came from the Merritt family who lived

in one of the hill towns west of Northampton. We find in this a very possible connection with the Noble family, for one of the Nobles—whether of Suffield or Westfield, we do not know—married a Merritt of Blandford, Massachusetts.

Although there is no possibility that either of these two Hadley type chests was made in Suffield, they can certainly be classed as Suffield furniture by adoption.

Another piece of early furniture closely allied to the Hadley chests, is the Bible box shown in Plate No. 8. The origin of this box is very obscure. We know only that it was discarded from a house owned for years by the Nelson family, who were allied by marriage with the Younglove, Noble, and Dewey families. In later years, the house had many owners, any one of whom may have been the owner of the box. This box, which is made of oak, has the strap carving similar to that on Hadley chests; but there has also been some attempt to carve the two large flowers in the round.



Furniture

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

the Kent Memorial Library, it would appear that Lt. Eliphalet King, his brother, Capt. Ashbel King, and Joseph Howard produced the lion's share of furniture made in Suffield from 1760 to 1790. Who made

the bulk of it before that is hard to say, as there are so few account books available for the first half of the eighteenth century. There are many possibilities, as may be seen from the list of joiners and carpenters on page 23. There are certainly many pieces that antedate the King and Howard period.

JOSEPH HOWARD, MASTER BUILDER

The first record we can find of Joseph Howard in Suffield appears on the Town Records of 1780, when he was deeded by Jacob Hatheway "1/4 part in the sawmill standing on the west bank of the Brook, near my House, where the old Iron Works dam formerly stood . . . with liberty to erect a shop on the bank of the brook above said sawmill dam." It is quite possible that Howard was the grandson of James Haward, or Hayward, who was in Suffield in 1704 and lived in this same vicinity. He and his family subsequently moved to New Jersey.

A reference to Joseph Howard is found in a communication sent by the Hon. Samuel H. Huntington of Hartford, to Daniel W. Norton, President of the Suffield Bi-Centennial Celebration in 1870. Mr. Huntington refers to the visits of General Washington to Suffield, in part, as follows: "On another occasion when Gen. Washington was passing through this town, he stopped, and with others went up into the belfry in the steeple of the Congregational Church on the hill (Plates No. 56 and 57), just built with its beautiful spire by Master Howard of Suffield." There is further reference to the erection of the church found in the Thaddeus Leavitt Journal. On June 15th, 1786, we find this entry: "This day returned from Boston, after a worrisome journey in the stage; also was raised the Belfry of the Meeting House." On July 18th, he notes "Raised ye spire to ye belfry this day. No man hurt." On July 22nd—"This day the 'Viene' was put on the spire of ye new steeple by Capt. Ashbel King."

Hezekiah S. Sheldon, the author of the Suffield Historical Collections, remembered this church and as a young man recalled when it was torn down. He said it was a very beautiful church, and he could never understand why it was demolished to be replaced by such a homely structure as the one now being used as a freight station on the railroad. Until two field sketches, done by John Warner Barber, came to light recently, there were no known pictures of this church. These sketches (Plates No. 56 and 57), now in the Connecticut Historical Society, show the church facing north and beside it, well out in the green, the third Suffield schoolhouse, built in 1797. This schoolhouse, which was later moved to the site of the present Town Hall and unfortunately burned some years later, had a stately cupola crowned with a gilded weathercock. It also had a fine Palladian window over the central entrance. This and the fine church building must have been quite impressive. I have gone into detail regarding the church because it is the real evidence that Joseph Howard was worthy of the title "Master Howard." As a builder, he was a master craftsman.

Howard was born in 1736 and died in 1810 at the age of 74. He married Hannah Dewey, daughter of David and Hannah (Hall) Dewey. His account book, in the local library, begins in 1783 and is most informative. He was then 47 years of age, so it is safe to assume that there were previous accounts, now lost. This account book shows that he made a quantity of furniture, along with his work as a builder; and he being the fine craftsman that he was, his furniture was probably of similar quality. It is also safe to assume that he was working prior to the Revolution—possibly as early as 1760, although not in Suffield.

In addition to being a master builder, it is interesting to note,

he must also have been an architect and draftsman. In 1792, the account book shows a charge to David Tod for "drawing a cornice for your house." Elsewhere there is an entry for drafting a bridge for West Windsor. In 1794, he billed Ebenezer Sheldon for "drafting a Meaton Hous." This was, without doubt, the second church of the West Suffield Congregational Society, built the following year, 1795. Numerous people are listed as going to him to "larn the art of building," among them, Capt. Ashbel King. In King's case, however, Howard writes "to larning of you the art of bilding in part." Apparently Ashbel King was something of a builder in his own right, as was his brother, Lt. Eliphalet King.

The furniture listed in Howard's accounts consists chiefly of bedsteads and small tables, probably candlestands, judging from the number of entries for turned posts for stand tables. Aside from the furniture, the account book is chiefly of interest because it definitely dates the building of several outstanding houses in Suffield, namely those of Timothy Swan, Timothy Phelps, David Tod and the famous north wing of the Abraham Burbank house, frequently referred to as the Hatheway place.

It has always been an accepted fact that this wing was built under the ownership of Asahel Hatheway, but the account book proves that this is not correct. Oliver Phelps, the great land speculator, owned this house from 1788 until 1802; and it was he who had the north wing added; and Howard was the builder. The rare beauty of the detail in the mantelpieces, cornices and door cases is further accounted for in the papers left by Phelps, which show that Asher Benjamin was the architect. Benjamin was considered one of the finest country architects of his day. Benjamin also designed a very elaborate fence to extend across the entire front of the Phelps property. His scale drawing of one of the fence posts is in the Kent Memorial Library in Suffield.

LT. ELIPHALET AND CAPT. ASHBEL KING

Eliphalet King was born in Suffield, February 6th, 1743 and died in West Springfield, August 29th, 1821. He married (1) Mary Remington, November 3rd, 1768, and (2) Silence Rumrill, October 2nd, 1788.

He was a builder by trade, but also made a considerable amount of furniture. No account books kept by either of the Kings have yet come to light, but there is plenty of evidence in the books of other people that he was not only a fine builder but also a real craftsman in woodworking. The fine detail in the corner cupboard (Plate No. 45) of his own house, built just prior to his marriage—1765, shows his ability. There is also a similar cupboard (Plate No. 46) in the Alexander King house, built a year earlier. As early as 1770, we find where he bought cherry boards, glue and a glue pot. These items could only have been used for cabinetwork. Then came the war, which found King at Bunker Hill, June 17th, 1775, and with Benedict Arnold against Quebec from September to December of that same year. It was at Quebec that he lost his gun. He was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, January 1st, 1776, and was in the battle of Long Island, in which his conduct was such that he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in September, 1776. Later he captured a British musket which he carried in several battles, even though he also carried the sword of an officer. It is recorded that he treasured this musket, possibly for two reasons: first, because he captured it, and second, because he considered it fair compensation for the one he lost at Quebec. In addition to all of this he found time to have a family of sixteen children. He must have been quite a person.

King's cabinetwork was well diversified. Accounts of many townspeople show such items as a square cherry table, a half dozen black chairs, seven chairs, a tighboard, a small writing table, and numerous other articles. There was even a washing machine. The list of furniture, which covers scattered items in several different account books, is quite imposing. If we could uncover some of his personal accounts, I am sure they would be very interesting from the cabinet-maker's standpoint.

Captain Ashbel King, born in 1747, was a few years younger than his brother, Eliphalet. Living next door to each other, they probably worked together; in any event, they both made furniture. When Captain Ashbel died in 1810, his inventory listed one half of a joiner's shop. Captain Ashbel was more the builder and carpenter, for the same account books do not show nearly as many articles of furniture made by him as were made by his brother. He "larned the art of

bilding in part" from Joseph Howard and appears to have worked with him on the new church. It was King who set the weather vane on the belfry in 1786. In 1788, he set the glasses in the steeple and spent thirteen and a half days repairing the windows. In 1780, Captain Ashbel King made a medicine and bookcase for Dr. Appollos King. It was probably one of the secretaries with the numerous small, square drawers below the desk, which were used for storing herbs and other raw materials of the doctor's profession. Fitch Parsons made one for a Dr. Currier, and charged it in his account book, as a "medicine and bookcase." I have always thought that a similar piece belonging to my great-grandfather, Dr. Asaph L. Bissell, and now in my possession, was the one originally made for Dr. Currier. Aside from this rather ambitious piece, most of the furniture shown to have been made by Captain Ashbel consisted of stand tables and candlestands.

JOHN MC MORRAN, MILLWRIGHT AND CABINETMAKER

John McMorran was born in 1727 in Windsor, where he lived until 1757. He served from there in the French and Indian War, but from Suffield in the Revolutionary War. He made a great deal of furniture from about 1755 to 1758, but almost all of it seems to have been for Windsor people, except for several bedsteads. Therefore whether we are justified in calling him a cabinetmaker of Suffield may be considered doubtful. The items that his account book lists would rate him as a better than ordinary cabinetmaker, for there are stands, tables, bedsteads, sway-back chairs, great chairs, slat-back chairs, common chairs, chests, and chests of drawers, and a "couberd." By the time he moved to Suffield, which was about 1757, he seems to have given up his cabinetmaking to devote himself wholly to mill work. We find him furnishing much building material boards, planks, slitwork for window casing, window caps, spouts and shingles—to Suffield builders, among whom were John Lewis, Eber Phelps, Ebenezer Granger and John Dewey. He died in 1812.



Other Garpenters and Joiners PRIOR TO JOHN FITCH PARSONS

ing list includes not only those specifically termed as "joiners" but also carpenters, housewrights, turners of dishes, chairmakers and wheelwrights. The list is taken from Land Records, Diaries and Probate Records and is not, of course, a complete list of everyone who could or

ords and is not, of course, a complete list of everyone who could or did make some sort of furniture. For instance, almost anyone could make the crude "hired man's bed" commonly used in early times and even what we know as "pencil-post beds." Also if a man was a wheelwright, he could certainly turn posts and stretchers for chairs; and if he could make a chaise, he could probably make any sort of furniture he needed for his household use.

This list is in alphabetical order for easier reference and the period over which these men worked, in most cases, is no later than the early 1800's—or to about the end of John Fitch Parsons' time—but in some cases, it overlaps slightly.

Austin, Aaron. Housewright. b. 1804, d. 1887.

Austin, Anthony. d. 1733. Often repaired the schoolhouse and church pews.

AUSTIN, Dr. NATHANIEL. b. 1678, d. 1760. Called "Dish Turner" in 1710. Was also part owner of a sawmill.

Austin, Richard. b. 1666, d. 1733. It was either he or his son, Richard Austin, Jr., b. 1688, d. 1761, who was known as a "Carpenter" in 1707, 1709, and 1720 and as a "Joyner" in 1746.

- BECKWITH, WILLIAM. In Suffield about 1799, when he married a local girl, Michal Granger. He built a house here which is still standing and a few years later advertised it for sale with a joiner's shop. He was possibly a wheelwright.
- [George Bradley of Suffield, and Forest Barker of Suffield and Southwick, worked on local houses about 1803. Also Eli Birge.]
- BURBANK, JOHN, SR. Came to Suffield in 1680. He was employed by Major Pynchon in building. He died in 1729. His son, John Burbank, Jr. was known as "Carpenter" and to him, his father left his carpenter tools, as John, Jr. did to his son, John, 3rd.
- BURBANK, JOSEPH KING. b. 1772. Called "Joiner."
- Burlesson, Ebenezer. b. about 1710, son of Fearnot Burlesson. Called "joiner" in 1734. Left Suffield about 1745.
- Burlesson, Fearnot. b. 1679, d. 1732. Had carpenter's and joiner's tools in his inventory.
- COPLEY, THOMAS, SR. Was in Suffield in 1683. d. 1712. His inventory listed carpenter's tools, a mill saw, and key.
- Coy, Josiah, of West Suffield. Was here in 1796. d. 1823. He was a carpenter and joiner. He also made chests in 1797.
- DEVOTION, JOHN. In 1724 he made the first pews for the church.
- Dewey, John. b. 1747, d. 1807. Maker of sleighs and wagons. Made "6 dining chears" for Elijah and Martin Sheldon in 1790, and in 1791 made a stand table, a case of drawers, and a rule-joint table. He also turned bedposts and made tools.
- Ensign, Charles. Was a housewright in the early 1800's.
- Fowler, Julius. b. 1786, d. 1862. Was a housewright.
- Fuller, Joseph. b. 1685 in Ipswich, Mass. Was a soldier under Capt. Turner in the Falls Fight. Was in Suffield in 1714. He died in 1744. He was called "Carpenter."
- GRAHAM, ISAAC KING, son of Rev. John Graham. Was principally a painter but did carpentry work and painted chests.
- GRANGER, ABNER. b. 1735. Made 6 chairs and a table.
- GRANGER, BILDAD. b. 1741, d. 1780. Made a bedstead, trundlebed and a child's coffin.
- GRANGER, EBENEZER, son of Bildad. b. 1771, d. 1803 at Hartford. He was probably a housewright or carpenter. In 1796, he advertised for 3 or 4 journeymen at the joinering business. In 1797, in

the Joseph Pease accounts, we find where he is charged for boarding the joiners for $13\frac{1}{2}$ weeks. He was probably the builder employed to build the school shown in Plates No. 56 and 57.

Granger, George. b. 1658, son of Capt. Launcelot Granger, d. in Simsbury. He was listed as "Carpenter" in 1708.

GRANGER, CAPT. JOHN. d. 1791. Called "House Carpenter" in 1743.

HALLIDAY, ISAAC, b. 1719, d. 1784, and JACOB HALLIDAY, b. 1719, d. 1784, sons of Samuel Halliday. Were called "Dish Turners" in 1744.

HARMON, BENJAMIN. b. 1711, d. 1795. A carpenter.

HARMON, JOSEPH. b. 1715, d. 1762. His inventory listed turning tools.

HARMON, LT. SAMUEL, brother of Benjamin. b. 1699, d. 1755. A carpenter and housewright.

HASTINGS, REV. JOSEPH. He was here in 1725. d. 1785. He was a "joyner" by trade but was also the pastor of the first Baptist church to be established in Hartford County.

There was a highboy once owned in town which was supposed to have been made by the Rev. Hastings. He might well be the one who made the early cherry desks on frame, and secretaries also.

HATHEWAY, LUCIUS, carpenter and housewright. Worked here in 1814 and probably earlier. d. 1858.

HATHEWAY, SHUBAEL. b. 1767, d. 1850. Housewright.

HIGGINS, GAYLOR. Made a chest of drawers.

HITCHCOCK, CAPT. AARON. b. Springfield 1705, d. Suffield 1808. By trade he was a joiner and also a tavernkeeper. He fought at the Siege of Louisburg and left a small journal concerning it. He was Suffield's Town Clerk for many years. His inventory listed a "chest of Joyner's tools."

INGRAM, CARLOS, of West Suffield. Listed as a joiner. d. 1840.

Kellogg, Joseph. b. 1691, d. 1751. He was a soldier. He was taken prisoner by the Indians and lived with them for many years. He and one of his sisters became interpreters. His inventory listed carpenter's tools.

KING, ASHBEL. See account on page 20.

KING, ELIPHALET. See account on page 20.

- KING, GIDEON. b. 1747, d. in Genesee 1798. He was a housewright.
- KING, ISAAC B. b. 1801, d. 1870. His inventory listed "one half of a joiner's shop." He was probably a chaise maker with his brother, Zeno King.
- King, John, son of Capt. Thaddeus. b. 1777, d. 1835. He was a joiner and carpenter. A chest of his joiner's tools is preserved in Suffield by the Suffield Historical Society. It is quite complete even to the extension candle holder.
- KING, ZENO. b. 1776, d. 1815. He was a chaise maker. Later his chaise shop was moved up to High St. and stood until lately in the rear of Albert Goodrich's house.
- LANE, SAMUEL, JR. b. 1709, d. 1750. His inventory listed many carpenter's tools.
- LATHAM, Amos. House carpenter in the early 1800's.
- LEAVITT, CAPT. ASAPH. b. 1695, d. 1774. He was called "Carpenter" in 1721.
- LEAVITT, JOHN. b. 1724, d. 1798. His inventory lists "a chest of joiner's tools." It also lists one Compass chair and one cherry framed chair. What the term "Compass" means is hard to tell but it might refer either to what we call "a roundabout chair" or a chair with a shaped seat. His son, Thaddeus Leavitt, b. 1750, d. 1813, burned his name on the Commode chair shown in Plate No. 13. This might be the one listed in John's estate as a cherry framed chair. Compare this with the armchair shown beside it. It is conceivable that both chairs were made by the same hand and we have a fairly good reason to suspect that they were made by John Leavitt. An account book shows that he also made a chest and a "B. G. stand." What the latter refers to, we do not know. He bought 100 brass nails & desk trimmings in 1775.
- Lewis, Ens. John. b. 1746, d. 1823. Was a house carpenter of some note. It is probable that he did some work with Joseph Howard.
- LEWIS, WARREN. Was a joiner in the middle 1800's.
- LOOMIS, CAPT. REUBEN. He was from Windsor but lived in Suffield for a while. d. in Windsor 1795. He was a carpenter.
- MARSHALL, EDMUND. d. in Suffield 1734. He was called "Ship Carpenter." His inventory lists carpenter's tools.

- MARSHALL, JOHN. d. in Suffield about 1755. His inventory lists "turning tools and a shop."
- McMorran, John. See account on page 22.
- MIDDLETON, WILLIAM, of West Suffield. d. in Suffield 1820. He is listed as a carpenter. Made a bed for Gideon King in 1790.
- MIGHEL, JOHN, son of Thomas of Rowley. He was here in 1681 and left in 1704. He was called "Dish Turner."
- MIGHEL, THOMAS. He was here as a settler. He was also called "Dish Turner." When Samuel Sewall of Boston passed through Suffield, he mentions in his diary that there was a dish turning mill on Stoney Brook in Suffield. The Mighels were the probable proprietors of the mill he saw.
- NORTON, GEORGE. See page 34.
- PARSONS, JOHN FITCH. See account on page 31.
- PEASE, WILLIAM. b. 1772. He was a carpenter and is said to have made a desk.
- Pomeroy, Capt. Isaac. b. 1745, d. 1804. He and his brother, Josiah Pomeroy, b. 1743, were carpenters. Many carpenter's tools are listed in both inventories.
- PRITCHETT, WILLIAM. d. 1697. He was here in 1683. He was son of William Pritchett of Lynn and Brookfield. Many carpenter's tools were listed in his inventory.
- RUGGLES, JOSEPH, son of Rev. Benj. Ruggles. He was in Suffield for a time. In 1723 he was referred to as "joiner."
- SEGAR, JOSEPH. Here as a settler. d. in Suffield in 1740. He is referred to in Land Records as "Chairmaker."
- Sikes, Thaddeus. b. 1775, d. 1853. He was probably a carriage maker and wheelright.
- Sikes. Many of the Sikes family were carpenters and housewrights.

 Jesse and Elam might be named.
- SIKES, VICTORY. See account on pages 14 and 51. He was here in 1682, and d. 1708. His inventory listed carpenter's tools.
- SMITH, EDWARD, Sr., son of Hugh of Rowley. He was here in 1685 and d. here after 1731. In 1704 he is named "Carpenter."
- SMITH, ICHABOD. b. 1670. In 1700 he was listed as "Carpenter" but his trade seems to have been that of wheelwright.

- Spencer, William. d. 1745. He was listed as "Chairmaker" in 1724 in the Land Records.
- STILES, ISRAEL. Was listed as a carpenter about 1814.
- WIGGINS, JOSIAS, of West Suffield, was a carpenter. He is credited with "3 days joinering at the school house" in 1787. He also made a cradle.
- Woolworth, Elijah. b. 1748. In 1772 he made a round table and bottomed a chair for Victory Sikes.
- WORCESTER OF WOOSTER, NATHANIEL. He was here in 1729. He died in Suffield about 1756. His inventory listed carpenter's tools and a half of a sawmill.
- YEOMANS, JOHN. He was in Suffield briefly about 1726, when he was listed in the Land Records as a "Joiner."
- Younglove, Samuel. b. 1696, son of Rev. John Younglove. He was called "Dish Turner" in 1704. Died after 1730.

AARON AND ELIPHELET CHAPIN

A great deal has been written about the Chapins of Connecticut and the beautiful furniture attributed to them. Notwithstanding all of the research prompted by both the desirability and unique style of these pieces, only two can be positively authenticated. They are the Robbins sideboard owned by the Wadsworth Atheneum and a very plain secretary owned by The Connecticut Historical Society, both made by Aaron Chapin. It is said that correspondence exists which might authenticate one highboy as made by Eliphelet, but such correspondence has never been made available for study. Another highboy, owned in East Windsor, Eliphelet's home town, has come down in the same family for generations; and tradition attributes that piece to him.

Wallace Nutting points out in the third volume of his Furniture Treasury that he probably picked up many of his ideas from those able Philadelphia craftsmen and developed his own unique style from them. It is also thought that Aaron, who was as fine a workman as his brother, copied the style of Eliphelet with slight variations in detail. These variations have been noted by studies made of several pieces generally accepted as being of the Chapin school. It is, of

course, unfortunate that more authoritative statements can not be made; but until something new turns up to substantiate the current beliefs, not much more can be said.

Whereas the foregoing presents the situation as it exists today, further research may, and I hope it will, bring to light something which will positively authenticate some piece of furniture as having been made by Eliphelet Chapin. We know that there was such a man in East Windsor who was a cabinetmaker* and that he had received his training in Philadelphia. We also know that there is furniture with certain characteristics and beauty of detail which set it apart from other furniture made in this vicinity. All of which poses the question: "If he didn't make it, who did?"

There is little doubt in my mind that most of the pieces, so long attributed to Eliphelet Chapin, were actually made by him and that some time the necessary proof will be found.

The secretary (Plate No. 23) was a Nutting favorite and he refers to it in his third volume as "the finest specimen now known of this Chapin's work." There is also an element of mystery about Mr. Nutting's illustration of the secretary in his book as he used a line drawing instead of his customary photograph. It is known that he took several photographs of the piece, but perhaps these were not satisfactory and he felt that the other medium would be more accurate; or possibly he intended using only line drawings in the third volume anyway.

The history of the secretary is quite well known. It came down in the family descendants of Ashel Hatheway until the last of that family, Miss Louise Hatheway, died in 1910. A few years after her death, one of the heirs moved to California and took the piece out there; but it did not stay for long, as Mrs. Emma J. Fuller of Suffield bought it and had it shipped back to Suffield, where it has been ever since.

There might be some question whether or not Ashel Hatheway was the first owner of the secretary even though there is nothing in the record to indicate otherwise. It is just possible that Oliver Phelps, who was the man of wealth who sold his beautiful home in 1802 to

^{*} See Plate No. 58 for entries in Joseph Pease's Account Book relating to Eliphelet Chapin.

Ashel Hatheway, was the original owner and found the piece too large to move out to New York State, so perhaps sold it with the house to Hatheway.

The construction of the interior of the desk is a fabulous maze of secret drawers and compartments which calls for considerable ingenuity to find them all. It must have been the product of many a sleepless night for a very crafty craftsman, and the secrets will have to be passed on down from one generation to the next just as they probably have been passed since it was made.



John Fitch Parsons CABINETMAKER

ARSONS' account book was found years ago in an old shed on the location of his workshop. It was in the possession of Frank H. Sikes for many years and was left by him, upon his death in 1949, to the Kent Memorial Library. The shop was located on the west side of what was then called "Crooked Lane," now Mapleton Avenue, in Suffield, in the vicinity of Dunn's Corner, where the road over the river to Thompsonville turns off. Little is known of Parsons' early life or with whom he may have worked to become such a fine craftsman. It is probable that he served an apprenticeship with one of the masters in some nearby town. He was born in Suffield April 12th, 1775, son of Ebenezer and Anne (Fitch) Parsons, who were married September 16th, 1772.

John Fitch Parsons married Clarissa Hovey on November 11th, 1804. Three children were born to them—Fanny in 1805, Ralph in 1807, and Ebenezer in 1810.

Parsons' account book shows the first entry as of September 1804, but he may have been at work earlier as many pages are missing. Then, too, there may have been an earlier book of accounts. The accounts close in 1825. He sold his home in Suffield in 1835; and as there is no record of his death in Suffield, it is presumed that he left Suffield at that time.

Typical of this locality, he worked almost entirely in pine and cherry wood. To name all the many items of furniture that he made would be boring to the reader. Suffice it to mention some of the more unusual pieces. There were the larger articles such as all types of

tables and candlestands, sideboards, clock cases, bureaus, secretaries, bedsteads, press bedsteads and turn-up beds and bookcases. Then we find articles ranging in price from seventy-five cents to nine dollars, such as coffins, a clothes horse, carriage seat, safe cupboard, fireboard, a pitch pipe, wagons, breadtub, crickets, frame for a portrait, rockers for chairs, clothes chest, boot trees, rolling pins, chests and a tavern sign. There are entries for "trimming" a desk or a bureau, meaning that he put brasses on the pieces. For a doctor he made a "meddison & bookcase." In the accounts, a Pembroke table is called a "Pimbroke" table; a washstand, a "wash hand stand" and a breakfast table, a "breakfirst table."

Often nowadays, we find a piece of antique furniture which appears to have been altered in some manner and we are apt to blame the dealer—in some cases, perhaps justly so; but Parsons did some altering back in his day. In 1808, he charged Hezekiah Huntington for "altering a case of drawers into a beaurow and table." This undoubtedly was an exaggerated job of alteration; but as he notes other similar jobs, it might account for some of the unexplained oddities in antiques today.

He bought his lumber here and there, in comparatively small quantities—390 feet of cherry at five fifty per hundred; 430 feet of cherry boards at eight dollars per hundred; 50 feet of butternut boards at a dollar; 400 feet pine boards at four dollars and forty cents; 600 feet pine boards at five dollars and forty cents; 30 feet of maple boards at forty five cents and so forth. He made a number of pieces of curly maple and a few of mahogany, but there are no records of the purchase of such lumber.

From all of the various accounts in his book, we should expect to be able to authenticate numerous pieces about town, but we are able to do so with only four. He did not label or sign any piece known. In 1807, Parsons' book shows that he made, for Ebenezer King, a sideboard, in 1808, a candlestand and in 1809, a pair of end tables (Plates No. 38 and 40). There were many other pieces of furniture listed in Mr. King's account, but these four have come down in the same family, by direct descent to Samuel Reid Spencer, the great-great-grandson of Ebenezer King. These, fortunately, are examples of his finer pieces and show the quality of his craftsmanship. The

proportions are excellent and the whalebone inlay work on the side-board, though simple, is very well done. The dovetails and general construction are of the best quality. There are, of course, other pieces in town which are so typical of his work that there can be little doubt as to the maker. Even so, this does not authenticate them. We can say, however, that the piece is "attributed" to Parsons with some certainty because we are here limited to furniture in one small town and to one cabinetmaker working at that particular period in that town.

Fitch Parsons, as he was usually called, had an irregular scale of prices, such as, sideboards—\$50; bureaus—\$17.50 to \$25, the more expensive one being of mahogany; pair of end tables—\$14; card table—\$13; secretary—\$30; clock cases from \$7 to \$20; and in one instance, he showed a charge for a clock and case at \$53.33. The prices of tables varied according to size, from \$1.75 for a candle-stand to \$6 for a Pembroke and \$10 for a table of breakfast size. Coffins ranged from \$1 to \$10 depending on the size and the quality of the wood used. He would put a light of glass in the coffin, if desired, for a total charge of \$12. The charges for alterations and repairs were very moderate; at least they certainly appear so by comparison with such charges today. A few of them were: repairing a table—.60; a stove—.12; putting a handle in an "umbrill"—.50; repairing a fiddle—.25; varnishing chairs—\$2.50; altering a case of drawers—\$3; repairing 3 candlestands, with 2 pillars and 3 legs—\$2.25.

See Appendix — Plate No. 60 and pages 119-122.



Gaptain George Norton AND HIS FAMILY

APTAIN Norton was born in Salem, March 28th, 1641, removed to Ipswich, and then to Suffield in 1674. He died November 15th, 1696. He was a freeman in 1681, innkeeper, selectman, and was generally prominent in the town affairs. His estate was proprominent in the town affairs. His estate was pro-

bated at Northampton, as were all the Suffield estates at that time, because until 1747 the town was a part of Massachusetts. The inventory of his estate is interesting because of the joiner's tools listed, as follows: "squares, compasses, a tenant saw, a hand saw, adz, wainscot plow, 8 planes, 4 chissells, holdfast, 6 augurs, chalkline, 2 jointers, 5 spear plane irons, 2 files, sett marking irons, grindstone, 2 froos, a plow board, cressing plane, 2 hamers, 2 gimlets, an inkhorn, spectacles, gagers, drawing knife and 2 pair bands." Quite an array of tools for that early period, unless the owner was something of a joiner by trade. It would appear that Capt. Norton was just that when not otherwise occupied by more important duties.

From Captain George on down through the ages, generation after generation of Nortons saved their cherished possessions and rarely, if ever, threw anything away, although the branch of the family that stayed in Suffield moved from house to house several times over a period of nearly three hundred years. The last family homestead is located on High Street (Main Street) and was built in 1814 around a much older house of the Spencers, by Daniel Norton, a man of some means (Plate No. 50).

The last male descendant, John Pease Norton, died July 15th, 1952. He was a Yale man and taught economics there for several

years. His knowledge of that subject, however, never improved his own personal finances. So it was in 1939 that I received a note from him which led to one of those fantastic antique "finds," which all collectors hope for some day, but rarely ever realize. John needed money, cash money, and had finally, if reluctantly, decided to dispose of some of his family heirlooms. I believe that he had sold some family pewter before this, but little, if any, furniture. His note told me that, as I had asked him to let me know if he ever decided to sell the Gideon Granger chairs, he was now willing to entertain an offer for these chairs in writing. Inasmuch as I had never heard of nor seen said Granger chairs, I chuckled to myself with the thought that John had confused me with someone else, but maybe it was just one of his subtle "economic" ways of approach. Anyway, I wasted no time in going up to see him and confessed that as I did not believe that I had ever seen the chairs, I would like to do so before committing myself to any offer.

"Up attic" we went and goose bumps began coming out all over me at what I saw—an attic crammed full of ancestral belongings. I was led to a large crate full of chairs, carefully bound with old newspapers. John told me that these chairs had been so segregated and packed in order to be kept together, so their identity would not be lost. They had belonged to Gideon Granger, Jr. of Suffield, who was postmaster general under President Jefferson and one of Suffield's most prominent citizens.

The attic was dark, but I had brought along a small flashlight; so I examined the chairs as well as I could without taking them out of the crate. I saw the cherry wood, the duck feet, both the transition and the saddlebacks and the large bulbous turnings on the front stretchers; that was sufficient for me to know that I wanted them—four of one type and three of another. I had hoped that they would be a set, all alike (Plate No. 12).

Then John led me to the other side of the attic, where a closet had been built with a padlock on the door. This he opened to show me another set of chairs, which he said he might also consider selling. It was a set of seven Sheraton fancy chairs, painted yellow—six side chairs and one rocker, all in perfect condition, even to the old glaze on the rush seats. They had been parlor chairs and rarely, if ever,

used (Plate No. 48). Frankly, I paid little attention to them or to John, for what I saw in the corner of that closet held me frozen in my tracks. I thought at first that my eyes were playing tricks. I said nothing but casually cast my flashlight up and down the front of a five-legged chest with drawers on frame, still in its old red paint—tear drop brasses—and all apparently complete. Then I got down on my knees and threw the light on the underside, thick with cobwebs. Meanwhile, John continued his lecture on the yellow chairs with the green vine decorations. All I could say was, "John, I would like the chairs and this chest of drawers, if you want to sell them."

We closed and locked the door and headed for the stairs, passing the old chimney, which stood out several feet from the north wall of the house. My flashlight was shooting here and there, picking up an old bedpost or trunk and then, back of the chimney, partially hidden by some old blinds, my flash fell on the William & Mary leg of another highboy—this one with six legs, the red paint and the tear drop brasses. Again, trying to be casual, I said I would like that chest of drawers also, but almost choked doing so. On the way out of the house, John told me to write him, making an offer for the chairs and the other pieces separately, "as the Granger chairs were very valuable." By that time, I had almost forgotten about the chairs after seeing those two very early highboys.

I simply had to have those pieces and knew I wouldn't sleep until I did, so I sat down and wrote John as requested, took it up to the postoffice for mailing and waited. I worried for fear that he might change his mind or even that the house might burn down. But his reply was prompt and favorable, and I lost no time in getting the two sets of chairs and the two chests out of the house.

The red paint on the two highboys was in such bad condition from old stains, that we decided that it would have to be removed. Much to my surprise, on the five-legged highboy we found the original coat of black under the red—a sort of lampblack rubbed into the wood. On the six-legged piece, two of the ball feet were gone and also a couple of brasses—all of which we replaced. There was nothing missing from the five-legged piece, except three brasses.

In a short time, John was in the selling mood again and once more I received a penned note from him saying he had decided to sell an-

other set of chairs—this time, Chippendale style ladder-back, a bonnet top chest-on-chest, a grandfather clock and a three part Queen Anne type secretary—all cherry. From these pieces we can be sure that some member of the Norton family had a taste for nice things.

Still later, the attic produced a portrait done in the late eighteenth century of a forbidding looking man—probably none other than Daniel Norton (Plate No. 49). It was in tough shape, but expert restoration has made it an interesting example of early American art. The house later produced two tavern tables, two pine chests of drawers, and several early slat-back chairs. There were also two fine Chippendale mirrors and other things too numerous to mention. But there was also the barn. Struggling up to the loft through the massed debris of wagons, cartons full of odds and ends and old newspapers, we found the floor littered with broken Windsor chairs—mostly beyond repair—the lion's share of a Carver type chair (Plate No. 1), all tied together, and last but not least, a small size Butterfly table (Plate No. 10). The oak frame and butternut top of this table were turned upside down, the leaves turned up to form sort of a box wherein were the nicely turned stretchers and one wing. A year later, the other wing was found; so when restored, the table was almost complete except for what the worms had devoured. It would be nice to think that this table might once have been used in George Norton's tavern; but, as it does not show that kind of wear, it was probably thought too choice for use in such a place.

The Carver type chair (Plate No. 1) is probably one of the "greate chairs" listed in Capt. George's inventory of 1696. It was almost beyond restoration both from worm damage as well as the happy thought someone (probably John) had had of pulling it apart, so that it could all be neatly tied up like kindling wood, to save space. The four posts are of maple, but the rest is ash. The two front posts have the remains of what appear to be candle sockets, but they are pretty well chewed up. An original finish of black was found under the old red paint, just as on the five-legged highboy. Whereas it is possible that the chair was brought from Ipswich in 1676 when Norton moved to Suffield, it is more likely that he made it in Suffield, as well as the five-legged highboy and the Butterfly table; that is, if, from the evidence of his tools, we accept him as a joiner of some

ability. All three pieces can certainly be dated within his lifetime.

The six-legged highboy (Plate No. 6) is, of course, later than 1696; but it is still a very early piece and carries evidence that it was made at the same joiner's bench; however, the cabinet workmanship is not as crude. A variety of woods was used in this piece whitewood, pine, cherry and linden. The same woods, except for linden, were used in the five-legged piece. The shapes of mouldings and the bevels of the dovetails further indicate that the two pieces are related. If these two pieces were made by the same hand, he had learned easier and more practical methods by the time he made the six-legged highboy. This is particularly true of the manner of putting legs and stretchers together. On the earlier highboy, the four corner legs and ball feet were turned in one piece and fitted into the pinewood stretchers by a dovetail cutout. The center leg was also turned in one piece; but from the stretcher to the floor, it takes the form of a long dowel, the ball foot having a hole chiseled through its center for the dowel. The ball was then held firmly in place by wedges driven up from the bottom. On the six-legged highboy, the legs are turned down to the stretcher and the ball feet are doweled up through burned holes in the stretchers into the legs.

It is possible that the five-legged highboy could be the "chest with drawers" listed in Capt. George Norton's inventory for it is just that—a chest with drawers on a frame. Also the date of this piece is certainly prior to his death.

DANIEL NORTON

Daniel Norton, great-grandson of Capt. George, was born September 13th, 1751. He was a man of wealth and undoubtedly was responsible for a great deal of the fine household furniture of a later period, which came down in the Norton family. Judged from the portrait, he must have been a rather dour individual and a hardheaded Yankee. He left an account book which was well kept up to the time of his death. It was he who purchased the tall clock (Plate No. 30) from David Ellsworth of Windsor in 1793, for the total sum of ten pounds, six of which were credited to him for one silver watch (Plate No. 59). It is the only clock known bearing Ellsworth's name, although he is listed in clock books as being able to turn

his hand to most anything. He was a brother of Justice Oliver Ellsworth.

The Ellsworths of Windsor were long associated with Suffield, by marriage. George Norton, Jr., grandfather of Daniel, married Widow Martha (Ellsworth) Stiles in 1717; and later David Ellsworth's father, David, Sr., married Jemima Leavitt of Suffield in 1740. David, Jr., the clockmaker, was a contemporary of Daniel Burnap, the more famous clockmaker of East Windsor and Andover. There is a great similarity between the works housed in the Ellsworth clock and works made by Burnap. However, they are definitely not identical. Burnap, according to his account book (CHS), charged a standard price of ten pounds or \$30 for a clock, the case being additional. A great many of his cases were made by Simeon Loomis of Windsor and ranged in price from three pounds ten shillings to five pounds. One case was made for Capt. Ellsworth in 1790 for the cheaper price and was probably similar to that illustrated in Plate No. 34, which is so like most of the Burnap clocks—plain, simple and without inlay and not to be compared with the case on the Ellsworth clock.

There is no entry in Burnap's accounts to indicate that he ever sold Ellsworth any clockworks or parts. The case on the Ellsworth clock is so beautifully designed with the delicate inlay and so different from the usual run of Burnap clock cases that it would appear to have been a special job. One of the most unusual features of this case is the treatment of the little side windows of the hood. Instead of the conventional glass, green silk was used, which was stitched to a small wooden frame made specifically for that purpose, even to the holes properly spaced for the thread (Plate No. 32). The price Daniel Norton paid for this clock would indicate that he bought only the works and, of course, the engraved dial, from Ellsworth. The case, then, was probably made by some superior cabinetmaker, such as Chapin of E. Windsor or Parsons of Suffield.

Another fine piece of furniture which came from the Norton house is the Queen Anne style secretary (Plate No. 21). This antedates Daniel Norton. It is unusual for its 33¾-inch width, its two candle drawers with carved shells, which serve as supports for the lid when open, and for the cornice moulding on the bonnet top, which is

returned and connected, so as to form a niche for the center finial. Beneath the two candle drawers is an empty space, which was probably intended for a secret compartment of some kind, but never finished as such. More than the usual or necessary number of hand wrought nails were used in the construction of the base; this suggests the work of an apprentice, who may have just hammered them in "when the old master wasn't lookin'." Many things contribute to the belief that this secretary and others were made here in Suffield. Plate No. 22 shows another secretary owned in town, which was without doubt made by the same hand. Then, too, the presence of several desks on frame, all having the same characteristics, would indicate that there was a local cabinetmaker working in Suffield, prior to 1750. He may not have been a cabinetmaker full time, but probably a carpenter by trade. Whoever he was, he had a flair for designing and building good furniture. The Rev. Joseph Hastings might be responsible, or John Leavitt.



Joseph Pease

WITH EXCERPTS FROM HIS RECORDS

***OSEPH Pease's grandfather, Capt. John Pease, came from Salem, Massachusetts to Enfield with his brother, Robert, in 1679. For one winter, before they brought their families there, they lived in a cave on the river bank. Capt. John obtained a pretty good estate for the times and a fair character. His grandson recorded that he had a great natural ingenuity and invention in business, which his said grandson seems to have inherited. Capt. John was captain of the Train Band and also kept a Public House of Entertainment for many years. Of his father, Joseph Pease, Sr., all we know is what his son recorded in his journal, as follows: "My father was of cheerful temp., a lively wit, and solid penetrating judgment not much engaged after the world; When he was about 47 years old he had a fit of falling sickness he fell by the side of the team he was driving and the cart wheel went over his hips, heavy loaden with boards he never was well to business afterwards. He had several more fits from time to time till his reason was much impaired. He grew exceedingly fretful, his memory grew treacherous, he would forget things that were and remember those that never were. as his judgment decays his tenatiousness of it increase—would be most out of humour with his nearest and best friends, would often get out of his bed in the dead of the night in the coldest weather-said that was not his house, nor his family—would walk around about half a mile (somebody, most commonly myself, to follow him) then he would go to bed and lie a while and get up again."

Joseph Pease was born on August 10th, 1728, son of Joseph,

Sr. and Mary (Spencer) Pease. He moved to Suffield on October 22nd, 1750, and lived for a while with Capt. Asaph Leavitt, where he worked at shoemaking from 1750 to 1752. He writes "hired a horse of Joshua Austin to ride to Enfield which soon after died for which cost me one years work." On July 28, 1756, Joseph married Mindwell King. He was more or less of a Jack-of-all-trades, owned a distillery and a sawmill, and was a merchant and trader of sorts. He accumulated a large property and built himself a fine house about 1760–65. This house was unfortunately torn down some years ago "to afford more lawn for the Connecticut Literary Institute." In the inventory of his estate at the time of his death in 1794, there were listed a joiner's lathe, chisels, and other carpenter's tools. He also owned a clock and a riding chair.

The following excerpts from the Journal are of general interest.

- 1753 Living with General (Phinehas) Lyman—built him a vessel.
- 1755 Sept. moved to Suffield, set up trading in Gen'l Lyman's shop.
- 1773 May 7—Dan Rowe's child had dung fork stuck in his head so that the brains came out—is yet lively and plays.

 19th—Dan Rowe's child died.
- 1773 July 5 went to Middletown carried my wife stayed 4 days
 Aug 11 went to Middletown stayed till (13th)
 Aug 16 went to Windsor sold our schooner (to John Welles)
 Nov 2 went to Middletown stayed til Friday
 Nov 30 went to Middletown—south Windsor
- 1774 Apr 5 went to Middletown stayed 2 nights

 June 1 This day the Harbour of Boston blocked up

 " 22 great troubles in the country respecting acts of Parliament to block up Boston Harbour & to alter the government of the Province. Gov. Gage had a large army fleet in Boston to enforce them, the people thro the land resolute not to comply.
- 1774 July 4 Had a town meeting an acct of the acts of Parliament blocking up the Harbour of Boston—adjourned to Monday 11th.
 - July 5 Went to Middletown

Sept. 4 Sunday we had an alarm by an acct that the Regulars were firing upon the town of Boston. 120 got ready to march to their help: it was a mistake & we did not set out but many thousand did—had it been true there would 100,000 assembled at and near Boston.

5th A Congress from all the Colonies meet at Phila to consult the Public affairs all the counsellors appointed by the King and all other officers in Boston Govt compelled to resign their commissions or flee to Boston or the Castle under Gage's protection no Tory dare show his head in the country.

General Lyman died Sept. 10, 1774.

28th The Grand Congress rise having agreed to a non import the first of Dec. next—non exportation first of Sept. 1775 and now consumption to enforce the whole & many other resolves.

- 1775 Apr. 12th This day 1200 of the Regulars under the command of Colln Smith marched out of Boston to Lexington there fired upon our men killed 8 and woulded many without any provocation—from there to Concord, burnt and destroyed stores & cannon etc. fired upon & killed 2 of our men who returned the fire and killed 2 and wounded many 4 of which died. soon 150 of our men drove them back to Lexington where they met Lord Perry with 1500 men and 2 field pieces which gave a check to our men but they soon attacked them with the utmost resolution being about 400 drove the whole body of regulars to Charlestown-killed about 200 and wounded many—took 60 or 70 prisoners. Killed of our men 38 of which 15 killed in battle the rest murdered—A general alarm throught the country: I went to the place 23rd.
- 1775 May 1st Ticonderoga taken by Colln Easton and Colln Allen
 - " 29th Our men had a skirmish with a party of Regulars at Crab Island near Weymouth where they came for cattle & Hay but were drove off without any and 8 of them killed.

May 27th Our men had a skirmish with the Regulars on Hog & Noddles Islands—burned an armed schooner of 12 four lbs. & 6 swivels—took all the guns and many other things out & brot away and killed and brot away all their horses

cattle and sheep without the loss of one man altho surrounded with ships of war & boats who kept a constant fire at them and attacked them by land—kill many Regulars, supposed 200.

1775 June 1st Augustin (his son) marched for Boston a soldier in Capt. Hanchet's company (Capt. Oliver Hanchet of Suffield, who went with Arnold on the march to Quebec)

June 17th A great fight between 1500 of our men and 5000 Regulars in Charlestown—our men obliged to leave their entrenchments with the loss of about 40 men killed and 30 taken. Many worthy officers among them and many wounded and killed & wounded about 1500 Regulars. Our men were much distressed by cannon for 4 ships & 4 or 5 floating batteries.

June 22nd. Received a letter from Augustin of the 20th informed that he was in the battle and escaped unhurt.

July 9th. Had news that Augustin was very sick at Roxbury Camp. I set out that night went as far as Springfield.

July 11th. Got to Augustin at Brookline—he is better. he had a swelled throat or sort of Quinsey called there a Horse Distemper find all our men well—warmer. Had a battle at Long Island on 13 Thursday night—Moses Huxley (of Suffield) was killed by a cannon shot 12th it pass through his breast on the neck.

Friday 14th, Set out for home with Augustin, he is better. Got home Monday 17th 10' clock AM.

Sat. 15th. My house was broke open and robbed of about 90 dollars in silver and 7 40 bills & 2 10/ bills and about 15/ small bills & 14p of copper.

July 29th. Augustin set out for the Camp—got down well.

- 1786 Dec. River so froze that sleighs got from Hadley Falls to Saybrook on the river over the falls.
- 1789 Apr. 10th. E Sperry ketched a salmon the 6th. Pidgeons have been exceeding thick a fortnight past—now gone.

 Nov. 19th. Newton the stone cutter's wife died.
- 1790 May 1st. Catch great plenty Salmon in pot nets—more than for many years past.

May 26th. Catch great plenty of salmon in sanes 4:5 or 6 wt. in a day in one net.

From JOSEPH PEASE' ACCOUNT BOOK

The following entries from the Joseph Pease Account Book are of especial interest because of those relating particularly to the famed cabinetmaker of East Windsor, Eliphelet Chapin. Very few, if any, such entries have heretofore been found.

| July | 1789 | Eliph ^t Chapin East Windsor Dr | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------|---|----------------|-----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | 1328 feet of boards at 40 | 2. | 13. | 0 | | | | | |
| | | 1300 feet " " 50 | 3. | 5. | 0 | | | | | |
| | | | 5 . | 18. | 0 | | | | | |
| | | Eliph ^t Chapin East Windsor Cr | | | | | | | | |
| | | by 1 Tea Server 5/9 by wine 2/ | | | | | | | | |
| May | 1789 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr | | | | | | | | |
| 1.147 | 1,07 | by mending hinge for clock by 1 set | | | | | | | | |
| | | nickles for chaise harness 13/3 | | | | | | | | |
| • | 1700 | | | | | | | | | |
| Apr | 1789 | Enos Doolittle Dr | | | | | | | | |
| | | to 2019 feet seasoned boards d. at | _ | | ^ | | | | | |
| | | Hartford at 50/ | 5. | | | | | | | |
| | | 130 feet | | 3. | 6 | | | | | |
| | | shingles | | 9. | | | | | | |
| N. f. 1 | 1700 | | 5. | 13. | 6 | | | | | |
| March | 1789 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr | | | | | | | | |
| | | by mending Gad Taylor's watch 2/6 | | | | | | | | |
| | | Enos Doolittle Hartford Dr | | | | | | | | |
| | | to 1 M feet Boards to him at Hartford | | | | | | | | |
| | | last fall 45/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | Cr by cleaning and mending my watch 6/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | by cleaning another for Baseth 3/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | by mending my clock wheel 2/ | | | | | | | | |
| March 1789 | | Timo Peck Middletown Dr | | | | | | | | |
| | | to 1 oz 14 gr silver left with him last fall 11/6 | | | | | | | | |
| | | Cr by 1 pr silver buckles for me with | | | | | | | | |
| | | the flukes and tongues the making 7/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | by one pr for Mind with flukes & Tongues | | | | | | | | |
| | | making 8/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

| July | 1789 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr by 8 Corner plates for Chaise 10/ | |
|------|------|--|-------------|
| July | 1789 | | |
| July | 1789 | | |
| Jan. | 1790 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr by 2 Brass Candlesticks 10/ by 1 sett Sley Bells 8/ by mending tea Kettle 3/6 | |
| Jan. | 1790 | Eliphalet Chapin East Windsor Dr To an order from Jacob Norton 3. 3. he accepted To toe cloth Cr by 1 Bureau 4. 5. by 1 Tea Table 1. 13. by 1 Chest upon Chest 12. 0. by 6 chairs at 21/ & bottoming 2/ 6. 18. | 0 0 0 |
| Jan. | 1790 | Drake Windsor Cr by making 1 pr Hand Irons by Two pr Tongs 1. 15. by 2 Shovels 12. by 1 Grid Iron 7. | 2 |
| Oct. | 1790 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr by cleaning my Watch 3/ He mended Oliver's sometime past perhaps not set down | |
| Dec. | 1790 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr by 1 Sett Sley Buckles 12/ by 1 Sett Sleigh Bells 6/ | |

JOSEPH PEASE

| Feb. | 1791 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr | | | | | | | |
|------|------|---|----|------|--|--|--|--|--|
| E-L | 1701 | by mending Royal's Watch 4/6 | | | | | | | |
| reu. | 1791 | Eliphalet Chapin East Windsor Dr | 2 | 0 0 | | | | | |
| | | To 144½ 16 Cheese at 5d | | 0. 0 | | | | | |
| | | To 34½ b Tallow at 7d | 1. | 0. 0 | | | | | |
| | | D ^d him at Esq. Fred ^k Ellsworths E Windsor | | | | | | | |
| Aug. | 1791 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr | | | | | | | |
| | | By Sett Harnes Buckles 12/ | | | | | | | |
| Dec. | 1791 | Enos Doolittle Hartford Cr | | | | | | | |
| | | by 2 Setts of Sleigh Bells | | | | | | | |
| | 1792 | From My Log Book | | | | | | | |
| | | Elipht Chapin Enfield Dr | | | | | | | |
| | | to 5 logs for Shingles | | | | | | | |
| | | June 21, 1791 agreed to Give 6875 | | | | | | | |
| | | Shingles for the whole | | | | | | | |
| Jan. | 1792 | Dorson Drake Windsor Cr | | | | | | | |
| | | by Ironing a Dutch Sleigh | 3. | 6. 2 | | | | | |
| | | by Ironing English Sleigh | 3. | 5. 5 | | | | | |
| Feb. | 1792 | Lt. Eliphalet King Cr | | | | | | | |
| | | by 1 Sleigh frame & Box 60/ | | | | | | | |
| | | Dr to plank for the sides 2/ | | | | | | | |
| July | 1792 | Lt. Eliphalet King Dr | | | | | | | |
| | | To 412 feet Choice Clear Bords at 6/ | 1. | 4. 8 | | | | | |
| | | To 320 feet Bord at 3/ | | 9. 7 | | | | | |
| | | To 160 ft. do at 2/ | | 3. 4 | | | | | |
| Nov. | 1792 | Lt. Eliphalet King Cr | | | | | | | |
| | | by 1 Chest 1 Table & 6 Chairs | | | | | | | |
| | | all 3. 12. 6 D ^d Abigail Cushman | | | | | | | |
| 0 | Di | NT TO | | | | | | | |

See Plate No. 58.



Relative Prices

to whether or not there is any yardstick of comparison for the prices paid for eighteenth-century furniture with present-day costs of making similar furniture. It poses quite a problem to figure this out with any degree of accuracy. The following thoughts are certainly subject to question, but they may serve as an answer until a more accurate formula is found.

The most natural avenue of approach would be by way of the monetary values then and now, but any research will show how utterly impossible that is, particularly when we consider the fluctuating currency of those days, to say nothing of the questionable value of the present-day dollar. They had real inflation during the Revolution when the Continental money became practically worthless, as the following scale of values found in an old Suffield account book shows.

| 1777 | Sept. | 1st. | \$100 | 1778 | Jan. | 1st. | \$152 | 1779 | Jan. | 1st. | \$742 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
| | " | 15th. | 104 | | Feb. | 1st. | 167 | | Feb. | 1st. | 868 |
| | Oct. | 1st. | 109 | | Mar. | 1st. | 186 | | Mar. | 1st. | 1000 |
| | " | 15th. | 115 | | Apr. | 1st. | 214 | | Apr. | 1st. | 1104 |
| | Nov. | 1st. | 121 | | May | 1st. | 230 | | | | |
| | " | 15th. | 127 | | June | 1st. | 265 | | | | |
| | Dec. | 1st. | 133 | | July | 1st. | 303 | | | | |
| | " | 15th. | 139 | | Aug. | 1st. | 348 | | | | |
| | | | | | Sept. | 1st. | 400 | | | | |
| | | | | | Oct. | 1st. | 464 | | | | |
| | | | | | Nov. | 1st. | 545 | | | | |
| | | | | | Dec. | 1st. | 634 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

There was lawful money and unlawful money and hard money of most any nationality, but probably the most common medium of exchange was produce of any kind used for barter. It is not possible to figure today's monetary value of something which was paid for by a few yards of cloth, a bushel of rye, or a barrel of cider.

The more logical method of approach would seem to be through the hours of labor necessary for a skilled cabinetmaker to produce a certain given piece of furniture, taking into consideration all the known variables. Probably the most important of these variables would be the allowance of time for the use of the power tools of today. We would want two or more pieces authenticated as to maker, the date made and the price charged. It would also be desirable to compare the prices charged by more than one cabinetmaker.

Two such pieces are available for study, namely, the Parsons side-board made in Suffield in 1807 and the Aaron Chapin sideboard made in Hartford in 1804. The Chapin piece cost \$68 and is made of mahogany with quite heavy inlay, while the Parsons sideboard is of cherry wood with more delicate inlay and cost \$50. Both pieces were made by topflight craftsmen, one in the country and the other in a large community. It is obvious why the Chapin piece cost more than the other.

Our next step should be to find out from two cabinetmakers of today how long, in their opinion, it would take them to reproduce a sideboard of equal quality to those made by Chapin and Parsons. Two such cabinetmakers working in Hartford have been most helpful in trying to work out this problem. It so happens that one of these, the Nathan Margolis Shop owned and operated by Harold Margolis, has reproduced the Chapin sideboard and has the timecards on it. The other, Paul Koda, is a fine custom cabinetmaker of long standing and reputation, thoroughly schooled in the old-time tools and methods of work as well as the modern.

The Margolis cards indicate that two hundred and eighty (280) hours were needed to reproduce the Chapin sideboard and this included the use of modern power tools. The modern workweek being 40 hours, this represents seven weeks' work for one man—or 35 full days of eight hours each.

In 1791, Joseph Howard, a Suffield cabinetmaker, charged six

shillings per day for his own time and three to four shillings per day for his boys. In 1797, wages had gone up to eight shillings for Howard and five for the boys. In 1809 Parsons charged 85 cents for a day's work. So, at this point, taking the accepted rate of exchange (local) at the rate of three dollars to the pound, Joseph Howard was receiving about one dollar per day and Parsons got less on a later date.

Assuming that the cabinetmaker in those days worked longer hours per day which would offset some of the time saved by power tools, we might safely still grant him 25 to 35 per cent more time than the thirty-five days taken by the modern cabinetmaker, which means that we should figure on a basis of a little over forty-five days at possibly 75 cents average per day for the old-time cabinetmaker with cheap apprentice help.

This would account for a wage cost on the Parsons sideboard of \$33.75, to which we must still add the cost of materials which might easily have amounted to \$16.25 including the hardware. This is certainly close enough to the \$50 charged by Parsons for his sideboard.

The additional cost of the Robbins sideboard made by Chapin in Hartford (\$68) can easily be justified by the fact that wages were probably a bit higher in the city and also by the fact that mahogany was more expensive in those days, just as it is today. The reproduction of this sideboard was priced at \$1500, being a figure arrived at by figuring the 280 hours at \$5 per hour, which included not only labor but overhead and profit and adding \$100 for materials.

The yardstick, therefore, for a modern, custom-made reproduction of an antique of known cost would be about thirty times the cost of a similar piece made in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.



Notes on the Plates

PLATE 1. The Carver type chair came down in the family of George Norton and is quite different in appearance from the one which belonged in the Sikes family. The Sikes chair, No. 2, is well turned and suggests the work of a good chairmaker—if not Victory Sikes, father of Jonathan, who we know had carpenter's tools, then perhaps one of the earliest chairmakers of Suffield, William Spencer or Joseph Segar—whereas the Norton chair is crude with very little turning and suggests rather the work of a novice, probably Capt. George Norton himself.

PLATE 2. The turned stool also is from the Jonathan Sikes family, and dates from about the turn of the eighteenth century. The stretchers are of oak, with fine sausage turnings. The crudely gouge-carved box, No. 9, is another heirloom of the Sikes family. The box itself is well made—the sides being of oak and the top and bottom of pine. The carver started his scroll design on the right-hand side of the front, but found as he went along that he would not have enough space to complete four scrolls, therefore each successive one is slightly smaller than the preceding one.

Finding these three articles of seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century origin in the same family, and in a family who were not acquisitive as were the Nortons, rather goes to prove that all three were made by someone in the family and probably by Victory Sikes, the settler.

PLATE 3, (see page 14); 4, (see page 15); 5, (see page 16); and 6, (see page 38).

PLATE 7. A six-legged highboy of walnut veneer supposed to have belonged in the Joseph Pease family, but there is no proof of such ownership. The piece indicates extensive restoration.

PLATE 8. See page 17.

PLATE 9. A grouping of several items from different families. The Chippendale mirror was the property of Lt. William King, whose house

still stands in Suffield. On its back is written in old script "David & George Merils and for Mr. William King Jr. Suffield." Lt. King died in 1792 and the mirror descended to his daughter, Lucy, who married Daniel Norton. It was found in the Norton house.

The two bannister back chairs were bought at the auction of furniture from the Gay Mansion, and came down in that family from William Gay.

PLATE 11. This walnut Queen Anne chair is one of a numbered set, but is the only one of the set to be found. The chair came down in the Sheldon family and was probably made in this vicinity.

PLATE 12. Chairs made for Gideon Granger, who was a prominent lawyer in Suffield and later Postmaster General under President Jefferson. There are three of the saddleback type and four of the transition style; undoubtedly there were more of each, originally.

Although there is a great similarity in the two chairs, it is not thought that they were made by the same cabinetmaker. One style might have been made by Eliphalet King and the other by Ashbel King, both of whom probably worked together in the same shop. They were probably made following the Revolution, maybe as late as 1790, and are good examples of how the rural cabinetmaker adhered to the Queen Anne style.

PLATE 13. Another example of two chairs with similar characteristics to the preceding chairs. The commode chair came down in the Leavitt family, and the transition armchair in the Norton family. Here again, we can attribute them to the Kings.

PLATE 14. A fine example of the Queen Anne couch, which originally belonged to Captain Josiah King. His house still stands on the west side of High Street north of the Center. The couch went to his sister Rhoda, who married Consider Williston, the saddlemaker of the Revolutionary period; thence down to his great-granddaughter, Harriet Williston Strong.

PLATE 15. Except for the Dutch feet, this tea table is very much like the succeeding one with Spanish feet. It was in the Gay Mansion at the time of the famous auction and was sold at that time, so we can assume that it came down in the Gay family.

PLATE 16. A very early tea table which might be dated in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The legs are of birch, the apron and top of cherry, and the moulding is of walnut, cherry and birch. The boxed slot for the candle slides is of hard pine which would indicate a very early

piece. Whether or not the other tea table is so constructed we do not know—it probably is.

PLATE 17. A very fine Queen Anne type lowboy about which we know very little. The legs are of curly maple and the rest probably cherry. As to its family ownership, we know that it came from the Latham family who lived on Latham Lane, but theirs was not one of the old Suffield families, so even if it has been owned in town for a long time it may not have originated here.

PLATE 18. A very early Spanish foot highboy with a wide band of inlay outlining the apron and a moulding drawer at the top. So far as is known, it is of cherry wood but the peculiar style of the Spanish feet seems to relate it to the tea table (Plate 15). If so, then other woods most likely were used also. It is known to have come down from Hezekiah Spencer and is still owned in that family.

PLATE 19. The looking glass was given as a wedding present to Captain Joseph Fuller and Mary King June 30, 1796.

PLATE 20. The pine settle was in the Norton family, and so far as is known was one of their early possessions. It now belongs to the Suffield Historical Society.

PLATES 21 and 22. See pages 39 and 40.

PLATE 23. See page 29.

PLATE 24. This desk on frame differs very little from others which are illustrated herein; it is made of apple wood instead of the usual cherry wood. It originally belonged in the Remington family.

PLATE 25. The legs and frame are a little higher on this cherry desk than on the others, otherwise it follows much the same pattern. It belonged in the Sheldon family and was probably made in Suffield.

PLATE 26. Another cherry desk on frame so typical of those found in Suffield. It is an heirloom of the Fuller family.

PLATE 27. This desk is of a later period and of larger size than the preceding ones. It was in the Norton family, but the engraved initials on the brass keyhole cover (AR) would suggest that it was originally made for a person other than a Norton.

There are very few names of that period beginning with "AR," such as Asa Rising, Aretus Rising and Amasa Rumrill. The last name appears to be the most logical—for one reason, that he did work for Daniel Norton;

in fact Norton's account book shows that he had a desk painted by Rumrill.

Another point of interest is that Rumrill's sister married Eliphalet King as his second wife, which would point very strongly to the belief that King made the desk for Rumrill.

PLATE 28. One of Joseph Pease's sons, probably William, is supposed to have made this desk. It is rather crude in appearance as compared with those made elsewhere in town. It undoubtedly was a noble effort on his part.

PLATE 29. The cherry chest-on-chest came from the Norton family but it does not in any way resemble the usual Suffield type of work. It therefore probably is the work of a Springfield or Hartford cabinetmaker.

PLATES 30, 31, 32. See text page 38.

PLATE 33. This clock was originally owned by Asa Pomeroy of Suffield, who died in 1846, aged 71 years. He bought the clock for forty silver dollars. The movement was made by Osborne Bros., Birmingham, England. The case is of cherry wood, inlaid with whalebone and satinwood.

The use of whalebone on any Suffield piece of furniture leads us to the belief that it was made by Parsons; he used whalebone inlay on the authenticated sideboard (Plate 38).

PLATE 34. The clocks made by Daniel Burnap, East Windsor, have always been popular in this vicinity. He records in his account book (C.H.S.) the sale of four clockworks to Timothy Swan of Suffield all at one time. This clock is quite typical of Burnap clocks; the movement is brass and the case is cherry, probably made by Simeon Loomis of Windsor, who made so many cases for Burnap.

The clock originally belonged to Thaddeus Granger, then to his daughter Maria, who married Chauncey Pomeroy, thence to their daughter Cornelia Jane, wife of Matthew T. Newton.

PLATE 35. Tall Clock, by Moses Wing of Windsor. The case is cherry and the dial engraved apparently by D. Porter, whose name also appears on the dial in an obscure place. The clock was brought to Suffield by Mary Jane Denslow Hatheway of Windsor Locks, in 1857.

PLATES 36 and 37. Tall Clock. Most important by reason of the fact that it was made by Simeon Smith of Suffield in 1801. Smith has never before been listed as a clockmaker, nor do we know of another example of his work. The case is cherry, the dial is brass with simple engraving, and the works are of brass.

Simeon Smith was born August 29, 1774 in Suffield. He married Chloe Smith May 8, 1798 and he died February 23, 1826.

PLATE 38. See page 32.

PLATE 39. See page 32.

PLATE 40. See page 32.

PLATE 41. This secretary desk belonged to Dr. Asaph L. Bissell, for whom Parsons made numerous pieces of furniture, according to his account book. Whereas there is no mention of a secretary made for the Doctor, it might have been made originally for someone else and so charged, all of which makes it impossible to authenticate. The piece does have so much of the Parsons style that we feel safe in attributing it to him.

PLATE 42. Bureau. This piece was bought at auction in 1904 for about \$60 from the estate of Benjamin Phelon on Ratley Road, Suffield. It is interesting for several reasons; first, because it is reverse-serpentine, then the lovely inlay work, and last because of its large size. Benjamin Phelon (the early spelling was Pheland) married Loraine Sheldon in 1848, so this may have been a Sheldon family piece, originally.

PLATE 43. This type of bed, with the high slender posts, is sometimes called "pencil-post" but this is probably of recent use; it should be called a high-post bed. There is little known of the history of this bed other than the fact that it was found in a shed in West Suffield along with several other beds. It probably belonged to one of the old families in that part of town.

PLATE 44. These Chippendale style chairs each represent a set of six, both sets coming originally from the estate of Daniel Norton. Upon his death, a list of household goods was made out for his widow and another list for his daughter. Each list shows a set of six cherry chairs, and there is no doubt that Mrs. Norton took the larger chairs with the slip seats, while the daughter Lucy was given the smaller chairs with upholstered seats, probably because they seemed more suitable for a young girl.

The chairs appear to have been made by the same cabinetmaker, either Eliphalet King or Joseph Howard.

PLATES 45 and 46. See page 21.

PLATE 47. A Windsor chair with this shaped back is certainly unusual if not unique, and there is perhaps a good reason for its being so. It would appear that the chairmaker tried to create a suggestion of the Chippendale

by putting the double bend in the top of the back, and we are told that to do this must have been more of a job than he thought it would be. It is thought that after making this one chair he decided that it just wasn't worth the effort to make another.

PLATE 48. See text page 35.





PLATE I - NORTON CHAIR, 17TH C.



PLATE 2 - SIKES CHAIR AND TURNED STOOL, 17TH C.



PLATE 3 - HADLEY TYPE CHEST, 1701



PLATE 4 - HADLEY TYPE CHEST, c. 1700



PLATE 5 - FIVE-LEGGED CHEST WITH DRAWERS, LATE 17TH C.



PLATE 6 – SIX-LEGGED HIGHBOY, c. 1700



PLATE 7 - SIX-LEGGED HIGHBOY, WALNUT, c. 1710



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PLATE 9 — A GROUPING OF EARLY PIECES



PLATE IO - BUTTERFLY TABLE WITH TURNED STRETCHERS, 17TH C.



PLATE II - WALNUT QUEEN ANNE STYLE CHAIR, EARLY 18TH C.

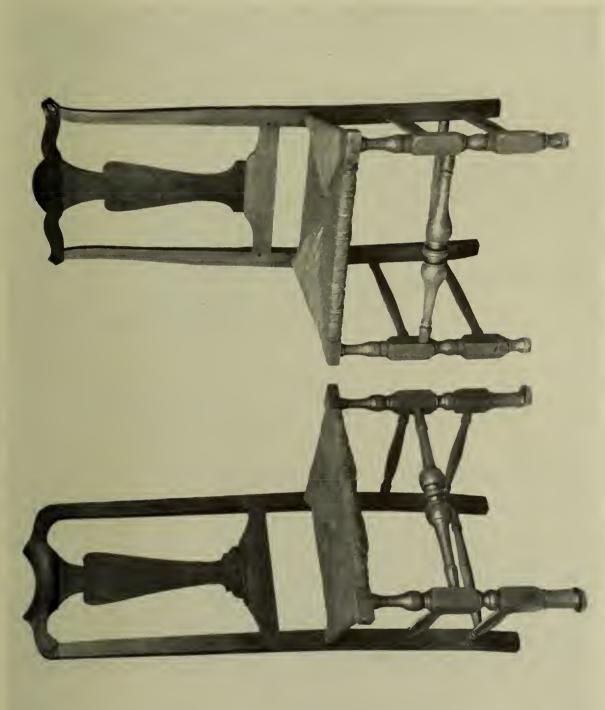


PLATE 12 - GIDEON GRANGER CHAIRS, MID-18TH C.

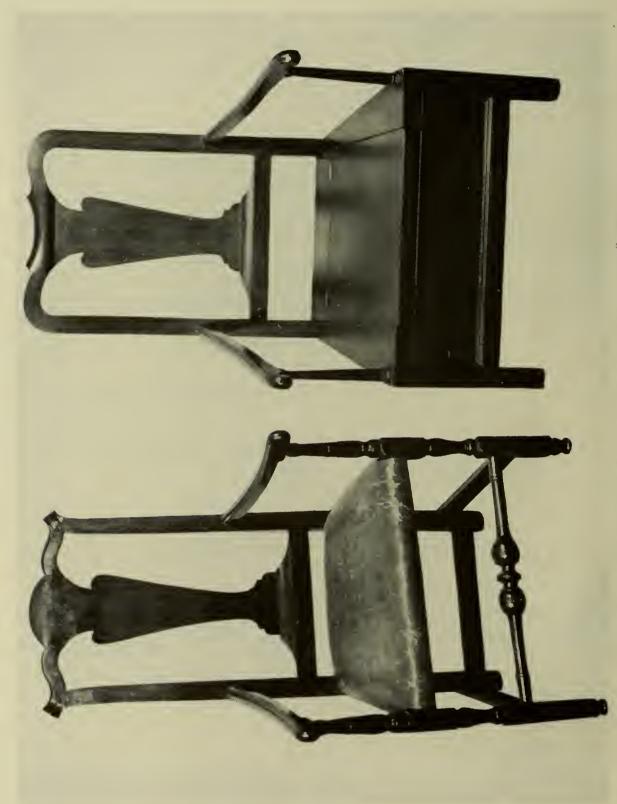


PLATE 13 - ARMCHAIR AND COMMODE, MID-18TH C.

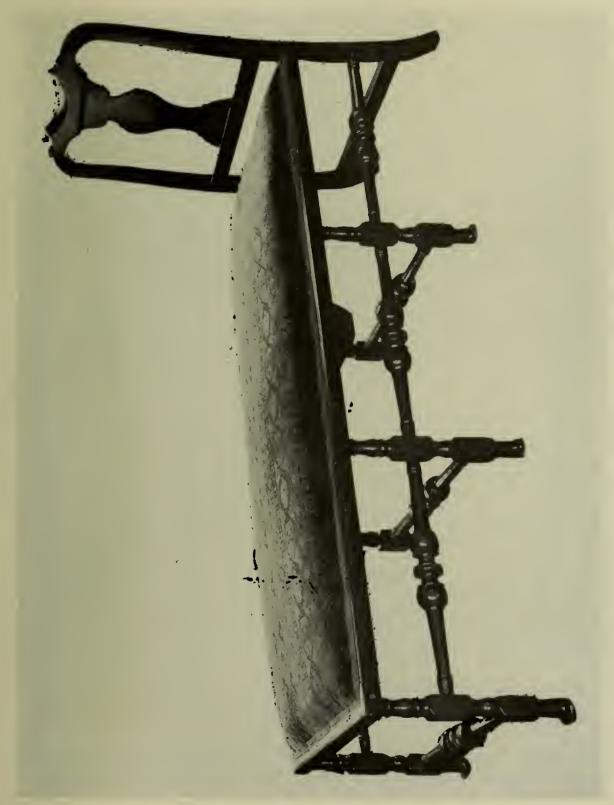


PLATE 14 - QUEEN ANNE STYLE COUCH, EARLY 18TH C.



PLATE- 15 - CHERRY TEA TABLE, 1725-50



PLATE 16 – TEA TABLE, SPANISH FEET, 1725–50



PLATE 17 - CHERRY AND CURLY MAPLE LOWBOY, c. 1750



PLATE 18 - INLAID HIGHBOY, MOULDING DRAWER, c. 1725-1750



PLATE 19 - MAHOGANY LOOKING GLASS, MID-18TH C.



PLATE 20 - PINE SETTLE, EARLY 18TH C.



PLATE 21 - CHERRY SECRETARY, IN THREE PARTS, 1725-50



PLATE 22 - CHERRY SECRETARY, IN THREE PARTS, 1725-50



PLATE 23 - CHAPIN STYLE SECRETARY, c. 1790



PLATE 24 - FRUITWOOD DESK ON FRAME, 1725-50



PLATE 25 - CHERRY DESK ON FRAME, 1725-50



PLATE 26 - CHERRY DESK ON FRAME, 1725-50



PLATE 27 – CHERRY DESK, c. 1790



PLATE 28 - CHERRY DESK, c. 1800



PLATE 29 - CHERRY CHEST-ON-CHEST, c. 1790



PLATE 30 - DAVID ELLSWORTH TALL CLOCK, 1793



PLATE 31 - DIAL OF THE ELLSWORTH CLOCK

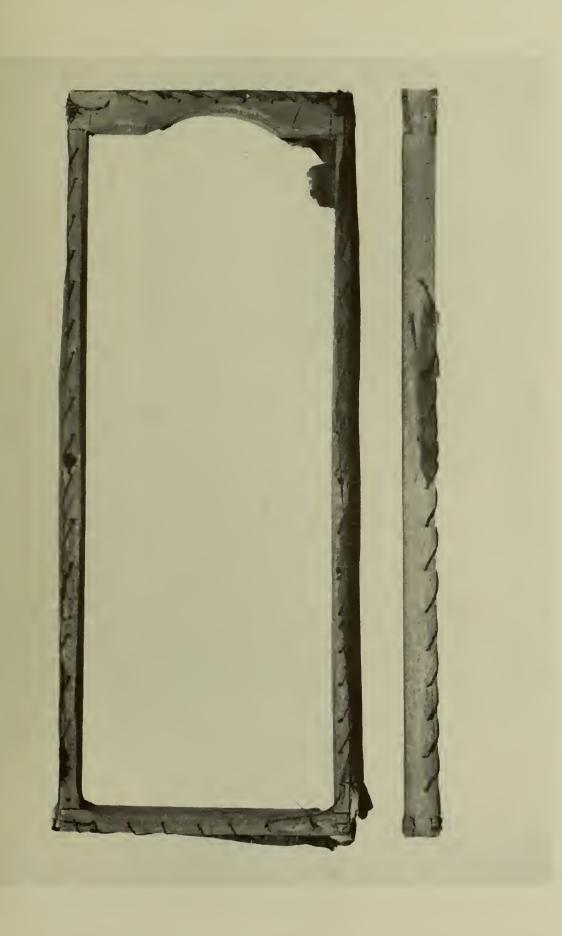


PLATE 32 - FRAME FOR SILK WINDOWS IN THE ELLSWORTH CLOCK (c. 3 x 9 inches)



PLATE 33 – TALL CLOCK, c. 1790



PLATE 34 - TALL CLOCK BY DANIEL BURNAP, c. 1790



PLATE 35 - MOSES WING TALL CLOCK, 1790

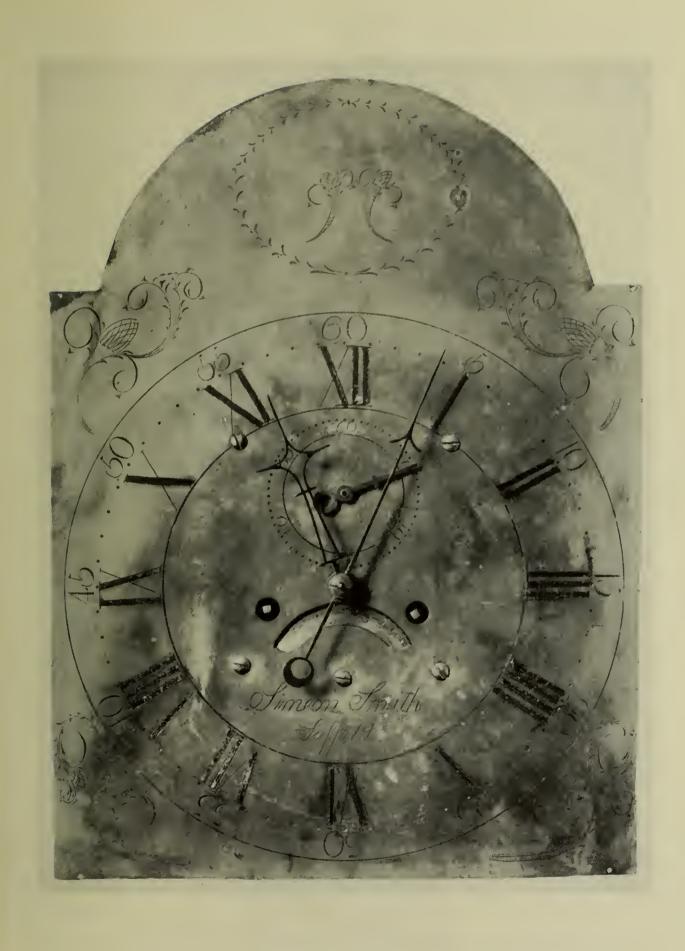


PLATE 36 – DIAL OF CLOCK BY SIMEON SMITH, SUFFIELD, c. 1790



PLATE 37 - TALL CLOCK BY SIMEON SMITH, SUFFIELD, c. 1790

PLATE 38 - SIDEBOARD BY JOHN FITCH PARSONS, SUFFIELD, 1807



PLATE 39 — SÍDEBOARD ATTRIBUTED TO PARSONS, c. 1800

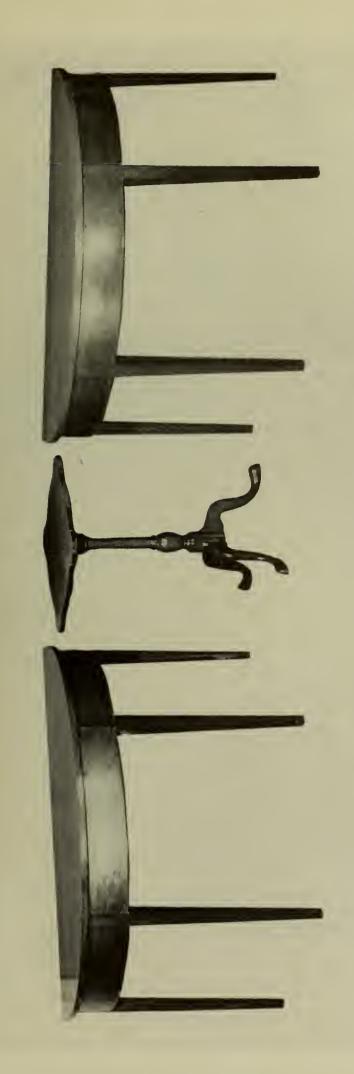


PLATE 40 - CHERRY END TABLES AND STAND BY PARSONS, 1808-1809



PLATE 41 — MAHOGANY SECRETARY, PROBABLY BY PARSONS, c. 1800



PLATE 42 - CHEST OF DRAWERS, c. 1790



PLATE 43 - PENCIL-POST BED, MAPLE, c. 1750

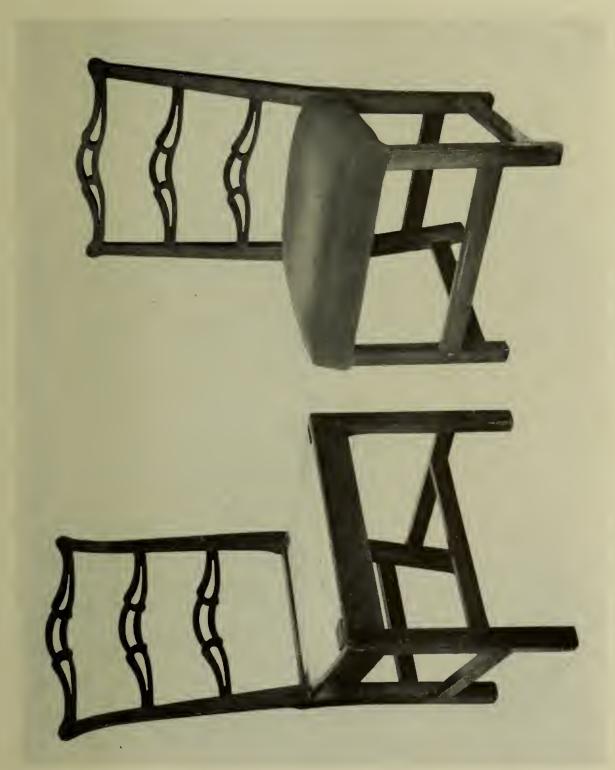


PLATE 44 - CHIPPENDALE STYLE CHAIRS, SET OF SIX EACH, C. 1790



PLATE 45 - CORNER CUPBOARD, ELIPHALET KING HOUSE, 1765

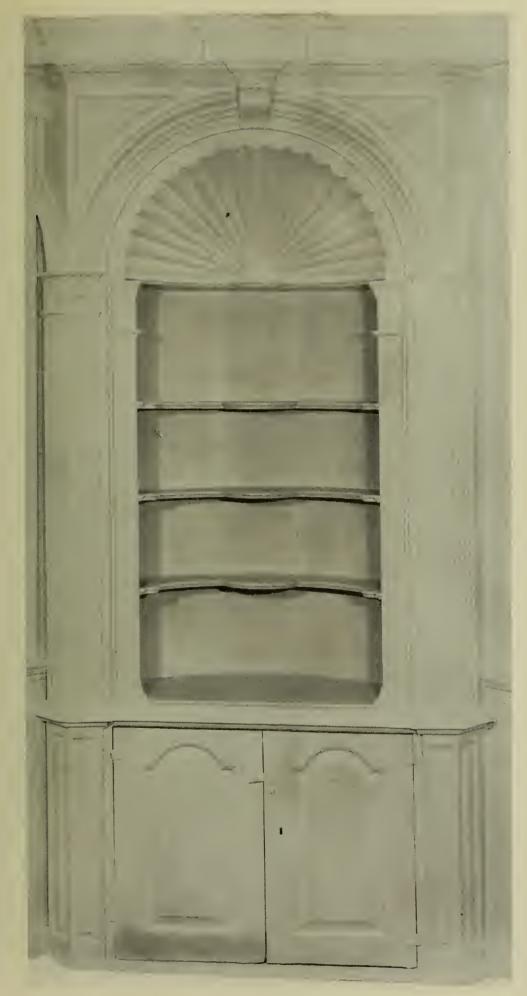


PLATE 46 – CORNER CUPBOARD, ALEXANDER KING HOUSE, 1764



PLATE 47 – WINDSOR CHAIR, POSSIBLY UNIQUE, LATE 18TH C.



PLATE 48 - FANCY CHAIR, SET OF SEVEN, EARLY 19TH C.



PLATE 49 - 18TH-CENTURY PORTRAIT, PROBABLY DANIEL NORTON



PLATE 50 - THE DANIEL NORTON HOUSE, 1814





PLATE 51 - THE GAY MANSE, 1742

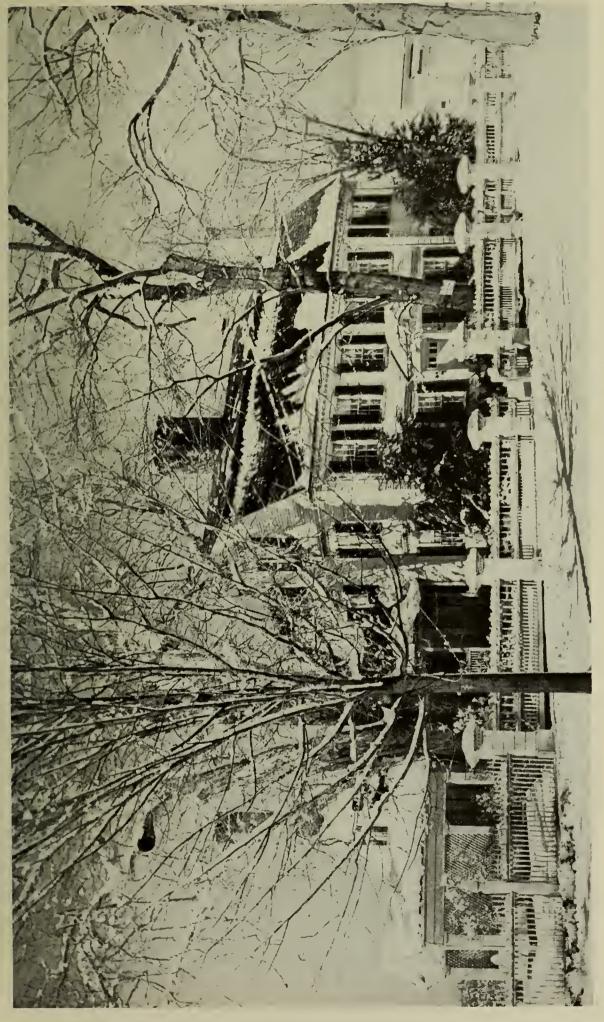


PLATE 52 - THE HATHEWAY PLACE, 1726-1795







PLATE 53 - THE GAY MANSION, c. 1795





PLATE 54 - ROOMS IN THE GAY MANSION

[111]

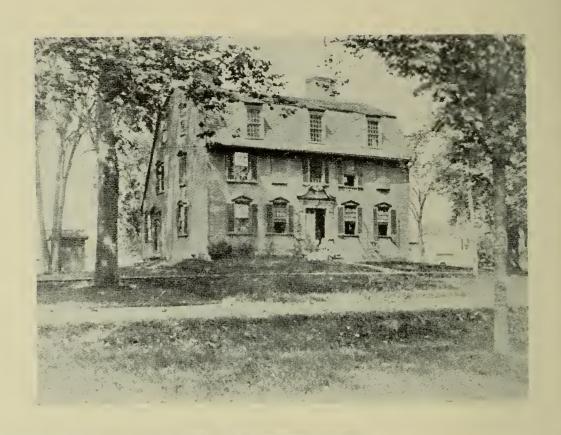


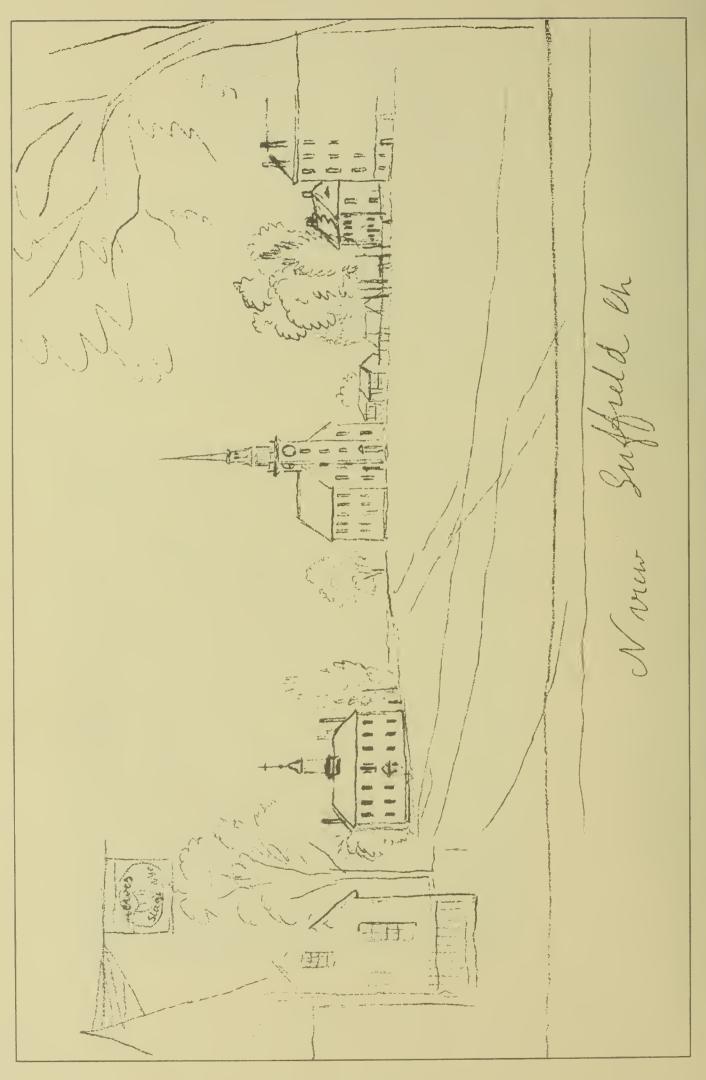


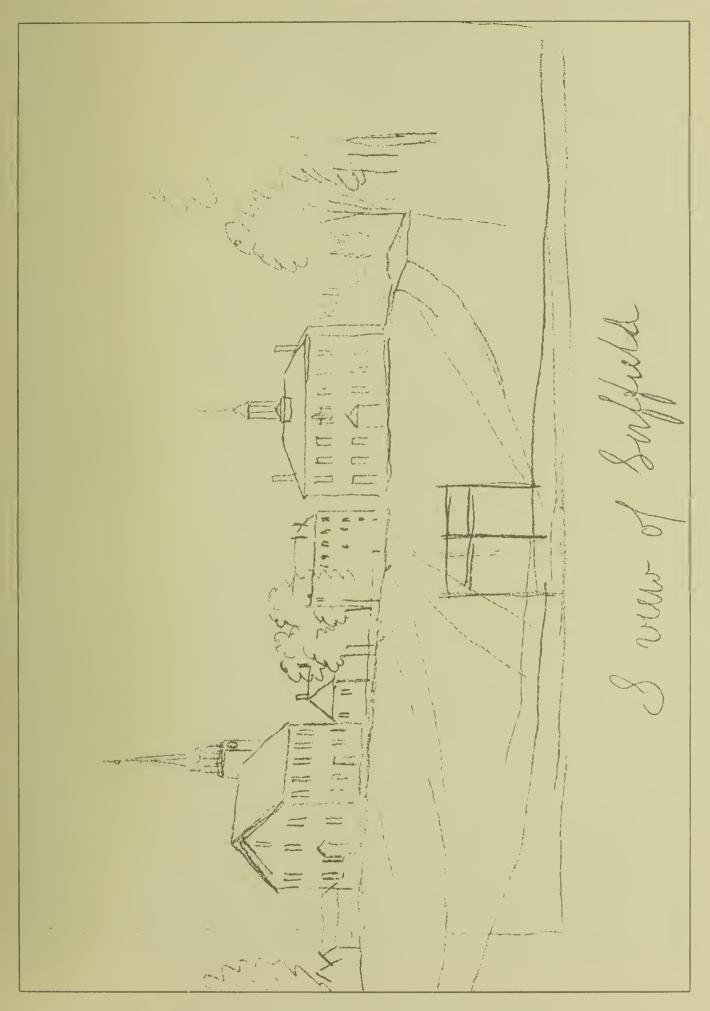
PLATE 55 – THE JOSEPH PEASE HOUSE, 1760

Appendix

- I. PLATES NO. 56-60
- II. EXCERPTS FROM JOHN FITCH PARSONS' ACCOUNT BOOK
- III. "THE POOL"







fa.. 7 29 1790 Enor Dootalle Hanfon En by a Brak towoleftich, 10/ by 1 Lett Hey Bek, 8) my mending lea Katte 3/6. Jacob Norton Crby an oron on Unitales liepen for 68/in host of an Eliphalet Chergin East Windford D un ovolufion Ja 186 Norten 63/ 23:3:0 la acceptar of the clocks of by I theft upon-that Coy of their Part & bottoming 91 by ? It Center go ... 25 3 9 of a file on to vary co to by attendance 4 of in my cochised as sante Smith. The stide Bit fu strad 1/2 23:1:5 25:0:0 classed of Shich & pin for is it & Daty 3/6 & Jewa 8/ et signifité leux one jon Govel / Ibigail Cofhenier Dile 6/2 72 Trape Maired to Nev left week prouday makes the aut Even

PLATE 58 - FROM THE JOSEPH PEASE ACCOUNT BOOK

September 164-1793 to I Silver Gaft wach you recieved of me the prife Size frounds ____ 6 by one fround 43 frence Gath -Agnil the by bath one pound nine Shillings and nine prende -It David Elfworth December 17th 1793 Precieved a block - -November # Gornal Sikes Lto 100 of 13 cep at 16/4 per 100× 0 168 October to - 1999
to an isuphels of Gorn out 4/8 per 13 upt of 5 2 8 Apollos Hitchisch Da

Min 1864 Chemizan Fring Ja latite To a table --of Spade handle & whije and too behandles -Lo a Runou-No a side bound ___ lo a durotareje -aginily do a booksuse ---- 20 June 5 hor to eight light Stands - 16. to for small tables it atilde - to lon withhilds double have 4. 3. Hospaner timere habelooms 14 in a renery table In fore Small willes La too wedstide could livered Levy & Bloom Hing Ca To Ballen 21. lors and disty six lands and their leen dol

EXCERPTS FROM

JOHN FITCH PARSONS' ACCOUNT BOOK

The following selected accounts from Parsons' Account Book are printed to show the scope of his work. The Account Book itself is available at the Kent Memorial Library in Suffield.

| Aug | | |
|------|--|--------------|
| 1803 | Jonah King | |
| | To a cutting box | 1.25 |
| May | | |
| 1810 | Gideon Granger (Postmas | ter General) |
| | To a Side board | 50.— |
| | " " high post bedstid | 12.— |
| | " " pare of nife boxes | 12.— |
| | " boxing work | 5 |
| | " delivering the above work to New Haven | 10.— |
| | | 89.— |
| Sept | | . |
| 1804 | Gad Taylor | |
| 1001 | To honing 2 rasors | 0.12s |
| | To a set of waggin boxes | 1.50 |
| | " " burow | 17.50 |
| | " " dining table | 7.— |
| | changing tables | .50 |
| | To weaving 13 yards of cloath | 1.8 |
| | and manning to justice to contain | |
| 1807 | Frederick Taylor | |
| | To a little chair | 0.34 |
| | " " cane | 0.50 |
| | " " pine table | 2.— |
| | " " cherry table | 3.— |
| 1808 | " " close horse | 3.— |
| | " " safe cubbord | 2.25 |
| | " " turnup bedstid | 3.50 |

$SUFFIELD \cdot CONNECTICUT$

| 1809 | " " clockcase | 7.— |
|------|---|------------|
| | " " fireboard | .50 |
| | " weaving 16 yards cloath | 1.34 |
| | To putting a handle on a chopping nife | .06 |
| 1810 | " making a carriage seat | .25 |
| 1811 | Books | 12.33 |
| | John Dewey | |
| 1808 | To a beaurow delivered to John Luis | 12.— |
| 1809 | " " beaurow & dining table delivered to John Luis | 19.— |
| 1810 | " " sideboard | 50.— |
| | " " jointer | 1.— |
| | " " clock case delivered to Doct. Peas | 16.67 |
| 1811 | " " shuttle | .50 |
| | " too shad | .25 |
| | " my waggin to hampton | 2.— |
| | " a press bedstid for Shadrick Trumble | 3.50 |
| | " " pare of tables | 16.— |
| | " " bedstid cherry | 9.— |
| | " " bedstid common " stand | 2.— 2.— |
| | " " harness for a carriage | 45.— |
| | " platid work for carriage | 15.— |
| | " flackseed | .42 |
| | " a butment on carriage | 10.— |
| | " order on Kellogue K. Kent | 14.— |
| | Samuel King | |
| 1809 | To a field bedstid | 7.— |
| | " " one horse waggin | 50.— |
| 1810 | " my waggin to Westfield | .50 |
| | " reparing a table | .33 |
| 1818 | " a small coffin | 1.— |
| 1819 | " " small coffin | 1.25 |
| 1821 | " 2 bedstids | 4.— |
| | " reparing a table | .75 |
| | " reparing a table | .69 |

APPENDIX

| | " reparing a stand " a bedstid | .12 2.— |
|------|--|------------|
| | Contra | 2. |
| 1809 | A stone pot | .50 |
| | | .25 |
| | By too stone jugs | .42 |
| | " 300 ft. of boards at 11 pr thousand | 3.30 |
| | " 400 ft. of pine boards | 4.40 |
| | " 100 ft. of clear stef boards | 1.60 |
| | " 3 thousand shingles | 8.— |
| | " 370 feet of boards | 3.84 |
| | " pine boards | 2.9 |
| | " pine plank | 2.50 |
| | " 600 feet of pine boards at 9 dollars pr thousand | 5.40 |
| | " 2 thousand of shingle | 5.— |
| | " 164 feet of pine boards | 1.80 |
| | " 252 pine boards | 3.00 |
| | " boards and plank | 7.68 |
| | " 2500 shingle at 2.5 cents pr thousand | 6.25 |
| | Seth Parsons | |
| 1810 | To an order on Dr Currier | 16.— |
| | " a dining table | 7.50 |
| | " one barrel of cider | .83 |
| 1811 | " Cash | 17.— |
| | " Cash | 10.— |
| 1812 | " 3 brooms & a spade handle | .50 |
| | " putting boards in your house | .50 |
| | " a breakfirst table | 5.50 |
| | " " bedsted | 2.— |
| | " putting a handle on a hoe & hammer | .18 |
| | " a kitching table | 2.— |
| | " " toilet table | 1.50 |
| | " " side board | 50.— |
| | " account on Israel Spencer | 3.50 |
| | " a stand table | 3.— |
| | " " field bedsted | 5.50 |
| 1813 | " " churn dasher | .25 |

SUFFIELD · CONNECTICUT

| | Contra | |
|------|--|---------------------------|
| 1810 | By cash " Cash " cash To order on Butlers Store | 6.— 5.— 5.— 3.08 |
| 1812 | By cash " cash | 5.— 7.— |
| 1813 | " three hundred of hay By cash | .25 .25 |
| | Asahel Hathaway | |
| 1810 | To altering a case of draws into too beaurows "putting on locks and repares "three locks "a little chair "pare of crickets | 3.50 .50 .34 .38 |
| 1812 | " reparing a bedstid & three chairs and wash stand a crick bedstid | .87 1.33 |
| 1815 | " reparing a spinning head " a coffin " reparing a crick bedstid | .08 2.25 .75 |
| 1829 | " a coffin " " box | 8. |

"The Pool"

Connecticut Journal, June 24, 1795

From the Connecticut Courant

Mess'rs PRINTERS

A MINERAL SPRING has lately been discovered in Suffield, Hartford County, State of Connecticut, the drinking of said water is almost a certain cure for the Gravel, or an inflammation which hinders the free circulation of the urine. It has cured a great number, and has not failed in any instance where it has been strictly attended to. The subscriber can by experience testify to the above . . . Many also have found immediate relief for pain in the head, sore eyes, breaking out in the head and face, salt rheum, etc. It is likely there will soon be convenience for plunging. For further information apply to Alexander King, Esq. in Suffield, Physician, or to Mr. Uriah Austin, who owns said Spring.

THOMAS NOBLE

In 1807, Ebenezer King, Jr. began buying up land in the vicinity of this Mineral Spring. He and his brother Fidilio finally bought twenty acres from Uriah Austin which included the Spring or "Pool," as it was later called.

Judging from the advertisements and testimonials, the water was considered to have valuable medicinal qualities which should attract a clientele suffering from various complaints. King, therefore, built a large three-story house with two wings to serve as a hotel where the public could stay in comfort near the Spring.

Mr. King also wanted the furnishings of the house to be in keeping, and had many items of furniture made by the Suffield cabinet-maker, John Fitch Parsons. These articles are described in an earlier chapter as being the only pieces authenticated as being made by Parsons—particularly the sideboard, end tables and candlestand.

Apparently, Ebenezer King lived at "The Pool" until his death in 1824, but had leased the property to Timothy Phelps, who acted as manager of the Spa. The following advertisement would indicate this.

SUFFIELD MINERAL SPRING

The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public at large, that he purposes to continue at this stand the approaching season—The liberal encouragement given, and the universal satisfaction expressed by ladies and gentlemen from Boston, New York, Providence and many of the principal towns in Connecticut, induce him to extend and improve his accommodations, and to assure the public, that he will omit no expense or exertion necessary to render the place inviting and satisfactory to genteel company. For salubrity of air, the situation is not exceeded by any in the United States. To those who honored him with their company in his first attempts the last season he refers with confidence, and solicits further patronage.—The superior qualities and salutary effect of these waters in the dropsey, gravel, scorbutic and other complaints, are too well known to require minute description. Among a multitude of other certificates which might be offered, those only of the late Chief Justice of the United States, Mr. Ellsworth, and Dr. Cogswell of Hartford are subjoined.

Suffield, April 10, 1811.

TIMOTHY PHELPS

Ebenezer King died and the property went to his daughter Arabella by inheritance. Thereafter, the whole enterprise was something of a failure as a Spa. She and her second husband, Deacon Reuben Granger, later conducted a boys' school there, but it would appear that this venture also was a failure.

The Pool house stood until about 1909 when it burned to the ground. The Spring itself remains as a rather dirty sulphurous water hole, and it is easily understandable why the natives in the early days referred to it as "Squaw water."

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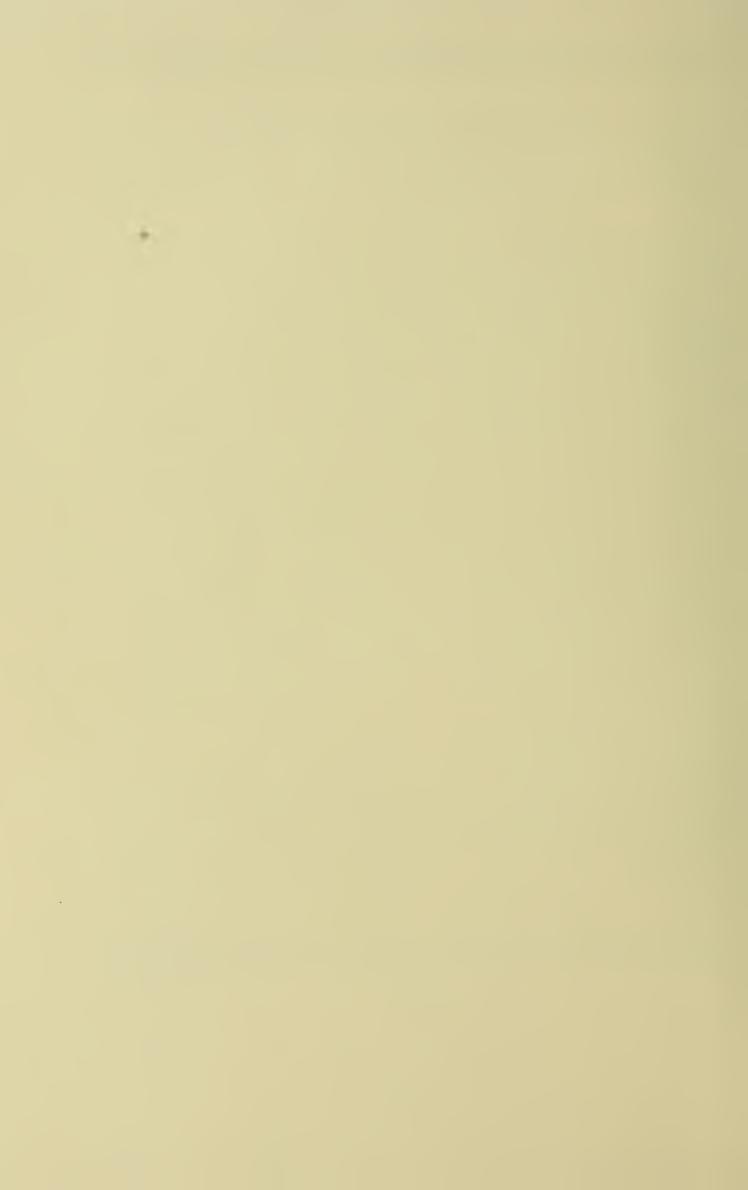
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